

Shepherd's Crowns



Lady Grey of Fallodon

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SHEPHERD'S CROWNS



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SHEPHERD'S CROWNS

A
VOLUME OF ESSAYS

BY
PAMELA GREY
(LADY GREY OF FALLODON)



*"Ah! what is Love? it is a prettie thing,
As sweet unto a Shepherd as a King."*

—Greene (1616).

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
NEW YORK :: :: MCMXXIII

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO STEPHEN

FOREWORD

THE title of this book is taken from a word in use among the people of Wiltshire. "Shepherd's Crowns" is the country name for the fossilised sea-urchins that are found occasionally on its chalky Plain.

I must express my thanks to the Editor of *The Spectator* for his kind permission to include Miss Hoper's verse in the essay called "the Singing of Birds."

For much that I have tried to suggest in the pages of "The Way," I would like to make my acknowledgment to the author of "The Fruits of Silence."



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FABLES AND FOLK-LORE

BEFORE printing was invented, and before books were available, certain individuals were held high in the estimation of their fellow-men. They were the Story Tellers, people who had rich ingenious minds; or such as joined an excellent memory and a fine gift of expression to the invention of others. These may be looked on as among the benefactors of mankind, for their work is alive to-day. It is still helping and cheering mankind in the great store of fable and fairy tale that belongs to every country. Their work will last as long as there are men and women to read and children to listen, because it is drawn from the very stuff of human nature itself. It has its living roots in a soil that is as fresh to-day as it was in the time of the earliest civilisations.

In one sense folk-lore is religious teaching. The word religion is one with the French word "relief," comes from the Latin root *Ligare* to bind, and if the word means "to unite" it is sufficiently pitiful to think how continually man has made religion to be a cause of severance. Now Folk-lore binds the greatest distances together, and unites us in showing us we are all kin. There is an Egyptian story that has the salient features of the story of Cinderella, which is of Scandinavian origin. Even such wide distances are spanned by the far reach of Folk-lore's human touch. America's "Rip-van-Winkle" is found in a

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Japanese story called Urashima, and there are many more such likenesses.

Now, what did this old habit of story-telling mean? What were they about, these old people? What were they doing with their fables and their tales? The answer is, they were teaching all the time; though they only set out to solace and amuse. And they would not have been half so successful if they had wanted to teach. It is just because they told of what they saw around them, the sorrows, the joys, the love, the craft, the courage, and the devotion, in short all the desperate grip of things that makes up the shining stuff of human nature, it is because they told us simply of all this that they hold before us so vivid a page of earthly existence. Let us look at a few of the myths and fairy tales that we have all listened to as children. They hold great lessons; telling, for instance of the beauty of compassion over callousness. When we read of the fairy godmother's power overcoming the cruel step-mother, doesn't the beauty of kindness shine plainly here? And then we read of the prince who had always such difficulties to overcome, who was told he must never look back but always go straight on, and succeed by constant endeavour. We didn't know as we read that we were understanding what a good thing it is to endure. Then think of the manner in which these lovely old stories always taught that nothing good was ever wasted. Not the smallest good action but had its inevitable result. How safely the tale went on, with all the children listening, and something within them saying, "That is what does happen, only sometimes one doesn't see the end of things here." Think for a moment, too, of the princesses that were shut up in dark towers, guarded by

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the most frightful dragons; but no power in the world could prevent, in the end, something quite wonderfully delightful happening to them if they were good. The steepest walls were scaled and the mountain of glass was put behind them, all to show how material things are quite malleable if we know how to deal with them, and that there is something much stronger than dragons—which symbolise evil. In short, "stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage," for the power of mind may convert such things "into an hermitage."

And this wisdom is taught in all countries. It belongs to the human race, however little use it is put to.

Here is a Japanese story about a robber and a spider. An unusual juxtaposition indeed; but the moral of the story will need no explanation. It is beautifully lucid and simple, and it is ages old. It tells that in Japan long ago there was a famous robber. He was known for his wicked deeds, and evil life, and in the course of time when he was killed, he found himself far down in the infernal regions. Many years he dwelt there till the time came when the Light of the East, the Lord Buddha, was to visit those realms of uttermost darkness; for there is no region so dark but that the ray of his light, from time to time, penetrates its gloom. Turning to him the robber exclaimed, "Oh, let me raise myself from this dark abode, let me return to a lighter region!" And the Lord Buddha, he who is the Blameless One, the Awakened, said to him, "Can you remember any kind deed you did on earth that might help you now?" And the robber set about turning memories over in his miserable mind looking for some good action. "Yes," he answered; "once when I was

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walking through a wood there was a spider in my path and I might have set my foot upon it, but I lifted it out of the way for it was enjoying the sunshine." And the Awakened One smiled and went on his way of mercy. Then the robber saw in the darkness a tiny silken thread. It hung down before him and he recognised it as the spider's web, with light upon it. Eagerly he stretched out his hands and clasped it, and to his wonder he found that it could bear his weight. Quickly he slung himself up, leaving his miserable condition behind him. And soon he saw the light of the sun and felt the warm air touching him. But as he was still climbing he became aware of a great murmur behind him, and looking back over his shoulder he saw all the denizens of the dark abode climbing up his spider-web after him. And the spider's web bore them all. Hundreds and hundreds of them were climbing towards the light, and the murmur of the great multitude was growing ever louder and louder. Then the robber was filled with a great fear lest the spider-web could not support them, and he thought only of his own safety. "Get back," he cried, "get back all of you! It's mine!" And just as he said the words the spider-web broke, and he fell down, down, down to the gloom from whence he had arisen. We can readily see what this story teaches; there is no need to hammer the shining metal thin.

Take this other Eastern story, just as humorous as the other is serious. It is called the story of "The Fakir and the Cooking Pot." It teaches that those who want to get the better of their fellows in any dishonest way may very neatly get hit by their own stick. There was once an old fakir, one who lived in prayer and poverty, subsisting on the food given

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to him by others in recognition of his virtue. One day this old fakir appeared at the door of his neighbour's house and said: "Can you give me the loan of a cooking pot to make something savoury of that which a kind brother has given me?" The neighbour lent him a cooking pot, and he went away with it to his cave. After a few days the neighbour expected him to return it, but as he never arrived the neighbour went to the fakir to claim his own. When he got there a surprise was in store for him. "Give you back your cooking pot," the old fakir said, "I would in a moment if I could, but I can't just now, and I will tell you the reason. The truth is, a very wonderful thing has happened! Your cooking pot has had a young one! I wouldn't disturb it for the world." "Well," the neighbour thought, "this is a crazy old man"; but he said: "What do you mean? How can a cooking pot have a young one?" "You just come and see," said the old fakir, and he went into his cave and pointed to a rough shelf in the rock; and there, sure enough, the neighbour saw his own cooking pot, with a little cooking pot close beside it. "Ah-ha!" he thought, "this is very good. Of course the old man is crazy, but it is all the better for me, because I shall get two cooking pots back when the time comes for returning." And aloud he said: "I see! You are perfectly right! I will come again for them in a fortnight." At the end of that time he appeared once more at the fakir's cave. "I've come for the cooking pots," he said. "Oh, I have very sad news for you," the old fakir answered. "Your cooking pot is dead. Yes, it died; in fact they both died; soon after you left. It is the regretful truth, but I mustn't hold it from you." Then the neighbour was very angry. "Dead," he ex-

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claimed. "The cooking pot dead ! Who in a long life heard of a cooking pot dying ? Give me back my property at once, I've had enough of your tales." "Ah," said the other, "you believed me when I told you the cooking pot had had a young one, because it was in your interest to do so ; and you will have to believe me now, when I tell you it has died, because this is not a bit more improbable." So the neighbour had to go home and realise that the fakir had caught him adroitly. But isn't the humour of the thing heightened by its being a "holy man" who was so very nimble in doubling his earthly goods ?

Foremost in the literature of folk-lore stand the Border Ballads. What a moving page ! Love and passion, slander and censure, courage and infamy, blessing and cursing, in short, deeds done ill or well, the narrative throbs and pulses as the human lot is told. And, mind you, there is no author's name to the verses. The anonymity of the Border Ballads is one of the astounding facts in literature. Perhaps it is because they are so universal that they cannot be ascribed to any one name. Let us look at the ballad that is named "Fair Flowers in the Valley." It tells of the sorrowfullest happening that can follow perfidious love, when a lonely mother takes the life of her infant, the very sight of which is more than she can bear. It is an old story, and the strength of it lies in this, that with an inimitable touch the beauty of Nature is repeatedly alluded to, in a recurring refrain, giving the force of contrast. The sheer art achieved in the design of the thing is consummate, and it is as simple as a sigh. First, you have the event put baldly before you. You are told of the tragic deed that follows, you hear the judgment sounding at the close in the recognition of guilt and the realisa-

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tion of the suffering that must follow; and all the time, like a soft wind blowing through Summer branches, close up against this tragedy you have the quiet words: "And the green leaves they grow rarely,"

She laid her down beneath the thorn,
Fair flowers in the valley,
And there she had her sweet babe born.
And the green leaves they grow rarely.

"Smile na sae sweet, my bonnie babe!"
Fair flowers in the valley,
"Smile na sae sweet, gin ye smile me deid!"
And the green leaves they grow rarely.

She has ta'en out her littel knife,
Fair flowers in the valley,
And twined the sweet babe of its life.
And the green leaves they grow rarely.

As she was coming frae the Church,
Fair flowers in the valley,
She sees a small babe in the porch.
And the green leaves they grow rarely.

"Oh bonny babe! gin ye were mine,"
Fair flowers in the valley,
"I would clad you in silk and sabelline!"
And the green leaves they grow rarely.

"When I was thine, O Mother mine,"
Fair flowers in the valley,
"Ye were not then sae sweet and kind."
And the green leaves they grow rarely.

"But now I sleep on Mary's knee,"
Fair flowers in the valley,
"And ye have the pains of Hell to dree."
And the green leaves they grow rarely.

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Mankind does much to spoil this lovely earth, and the green leaves still grow rarely, and however sinful and sorrowful we may be there are still fair flowers in the valley. You would think that we must blacken things, but it is not so; and the manner in which the ballad brings out this point so simply is what makes it the immortal verse it is. The constancy of Nature, and its imperishable beauty. Another way of saying "Underneath are the Everlasting Arms."

Then there is the great ballad called "The Wife of Usher's Well." This has for its theme a matter of passing interest. It deals with the love that is stronger than death, that penetrates the veil of death. The love that brings the souls of those, so often and so wrongly called the "departed," once again into the earthly vision of the bereaved, so that the mourner is convinced of their continued existence, and is comforted. The great point to be noticed here is that when the mother sees the spirits of her dead sons, she sees them dressed in their earthly garments. They are wearing the clothes she recognises, and yet, in one line—a master stroke—we are told that these clothes were not of earthly origin. Yet they are dressed as she remembers them, they are "happed" around with her mantle. She lays them to rest upon her bed. The point to be taken is that they are actually there with her; and they are there because of the greatness of her longing that they should be so. The force of this old ballad, its simplicity of narrative, and event, remind you as you read of some of the stories in the New Testament.

There lived a wife at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she,
She had three stout and stalwart sons,
And sent them o'er the sea.

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They hadna been a week from her,
An week but barely ane,
When word cam' to the carline wife
That her three sons were gane.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely three,
When word cam' to the carline wife
That her sons she'd never see.

"I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor freshets in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me
In earthly flesh and blood."

It fell about the Martinmas,
When nights are lang and mirk,
The carline wife's three sons cam' home
And their hats were of the birk.

It never grew in syke nor ditch,
Nor yet in ony sheugh;
But at the gates of Paradise
That birk grew fair eneugh.

"Blow up the fire now, maidens mine,
Bring water from the well
For all my house shall feast this night
Since my three sons are well."

And she has made to them a bed,
She's made it large and wide;
And she's ta'en her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bed side.

Up then crew the red, red cock,
And up and crew the grey,
The eldest to the youngest said,
"'Tis time we were away."

"The cock doth crawl, the day doth daw',
The channering worm doth chide,
Gin we are missed out of our place
A sair pain we maun bide,"

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“ Lie still, lie still but a little wee while,
Lie still but if we may,
Gin my mother should miss us when she wakes
She'll go mad e'er it be day.”

O, it's they've ta'en up their mother's mantle,
And they've hung it on a pin.
“ Oh! lang may ye hing, my mother's mantle,
E'er ye hap us again.”

“ Fare ye well, my mother dear, '
Fare weel to barn and byre;
And fare ye well, the bonny lass
That kindles my mother's fire.”

You may find among the ballads variants of the same theme, just as you may find variants of the same fairy story in different countries, and it is interesting to follow some of these. One idea that often occurs is the mercy shown by God to erring mortals. In one form we are told of a nun who spent years of prayer and self-sacrifice in a convent, but who was tormented ceaselessly by a great longing to escape. One night she is given the duty of guarding the convent door, and during the long hours temptation comes strongly upon her to join in the outer life. She sees through the grating the open country, and the lights of the town in the valley, where a festival is being held. The desire to break her bonds overmasters her, and she leaves her post, deserting her duty and breaking her vows. All night she revels with the crowd, joining in the carnival, and late in the grey dawn, utterly broken and sorrowful, she steals back to the convent on the hill.

And when she comes to the grated door thinking she will be denounced by her Superior, and degraded for ever, she hears the bolts drawn back and she sees

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a veiled form standing there in the likeness of herself, with a great light shining around. Then it becomes clear to her that the Virgin Mary herself has taken her place, and kept the door for her all night so that her fault should not be discovered; and this because her better self had never consented to her sin. You find this central idea in other forms. It tells of a high spirit ministering on earth when human nature, through weakness or weariness, cannot support the load.

“Now let us praise famous men, and our Fathers that begat us. . . . Such as found out musical tunes, and such as recited verses in writing. . . .” For they have left us a great heritage. Their words in song and story are with us still. Just as we may look into clear water and see an image of the moon, so we can look upon the pages of Folk-lore and see there mirrored an image of the Spirit of Man; a thing not without blemishes, but holding nevertheless a something without which our night would be dark indeed. It is this which lights Man’s long pilgrimage. Like the Moon it gives the reflection of a light far greater than itself, something far brighter, far loftier, than anything we can directly gaze upon; but it bears testimony to a light which we know is there, and which shines for all.

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A wondrous pyle of rugged mountaynes stand,
Placed on each other in a dreare arraie.
It ne could be the work of human hand,
It ne was raised up by men of claie.
Here did the Britons adoration paye
To the false god who they did Tauran name,
Lyghtynge his alter with great fyers in baie,
Roasting their victims round about the flame.
'Twas here that Hengist did the Britons slee
As they were met in council for to bee.

—Chatterton.

AMONG other writers, Thomas Jefferson Hogg, in his *Life of Shelley*, speaks of his visit to Salisbury Plain. He did well to visit Stonehenge in winter, for those who have seen it at all times know that it is best seen at this season, when the stones loom suddenly near, and black as iron in the slanting rain, or stand dimly outlined in the dark of a winter's day.

Hogg writes:—

“I continued my journey over a vast plain. Not a dead level, but gently undulating, and covered with snow. After a time I reached Amesbury, which seemed notwithstanding a thick covering of snow, a pleasant spot, a fruitful oasis in the midst of a desert. I readily found my way to the celebrated Stonehenge. It is a wonderful monument, of a most remote and unknown antiquity; *but I could not think that there was much to see there.* Many sheep had found shelter among the ruins, and were attended by two or three shepherds. I remembered when a child I had read with pleasure some tale of the shepherd of Salisbury Plain. Here he was then; I had found him at last! The shepherds were very civil to me; they seemed deeply impressed with the importance of the locality, and explained various matters to me. One of them

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gave to me at parting a piece which he himself had broken off, and he pointed out the stone from which he had taken it, fitting it into its place exactly. Then he pointed out to me the way to Salisbury, telling me when I should see the tall spire before me, a distance of about six miles."

I have italicised one phrase in this quotation; that in which Hogg says: "there is not much to be seen there," speaking of Stonehenge. It is a remark so often made by those who see it for the first time. The place is strange and baffling to the mind, to those who take as Hogg did, a cursory view of it, they often arrive at this conclusion. They might more truly say, "there is not much to be said about it"; for there is no limit to what may be seen here if we "bring to the seeing."

Britton, in his *Beauties of England and Wales*, writes:

"At a distance this monument appears a trifling object, for its bulk and character are lost in the vastness of the open space around it. On a nearer approach it commonly fails to astonish or satisfy the stranger. It must be seen with the eye of the antiquary or the artist, and contemplated by a mind stored with historical knowledge, to be properly appreciated."

And later he remarks, in a sentence redolent of his date:—

"Whilst the learned have at once amused and bewildered themselves with theoretical speculations concerning its origin and uses, the vulgar have contemplated its remains with superstitious amazement and awe."

Hogg's account of the generous shepherd who had chipped the fragment he gave away may count in favour of the fence now around the Stones, over which there was a great outcry. It preserves the ruin, bitter though its presence must be to those who

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knew the place before. Stonehenge owes its dilapidation as much to the hand of man, as to the passage of the Ages. Stones were removed to build with, in days when no one cared to preserve such monuments, and in these later days of appreciation of such things, the zealous tourist may well have brought out a little hammer to gain a chip.

The shepherds of Salisbury Plain are becoming rarer, for farmers are taking largely to fence in their Down pastures. But the shepherd is here still, with his long black cloak falling from neck to heels, his round felt hat like Hermes' cap without the wings to it, but sometimes a bunch of blue milk-wort or a yellow hawk weed in the brim. And he leads his sheep, for he does not always drive them. He goes with his plume-tailed dog in front, and the sheep follow, as you may see it in the East. Aubrey, in the *Natural History of Wilts.*, tells us of the shepherds of Salisbury Plain—

“Their habit, I believe, is that of the Roman or Arcadian shepherds—a long white cloake with a very deep cape, which comes half-way down their backs, made of the locks of sheep. There was a sheep-crooke, a sling, a scrip, their tar-box, a pipe or flute, and their dog. But since 1671 they are grown so luxurious as to neglect their ancient warme and useful fashion, and go *a la mode*. Before the civil wars I remember many of them made straw hatts, which I think is now left off.”

Those who live in South Wiltshire grow to love the sound of the sheep bells;—“the tinkling bell-notes falling clear and cold.”

On these large tracts of land, these undulating sweeps with the low horizon, the ancient sport of hawking is carried on; of all sports in its pretty accessories the most romantic; the green livery of the servants, the gauntlet glove, the covered van filled

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with hawks placed in rows and almost motionless because hooded and for the time bereft of sight; the soft bells on the jesses, and when these are removed the swift turn of the beautiful head from right to left; a head held so erect, and then as swiftly lowered; the burning eyes and perfect poise of body set broad on the tramping thighs; and then the flight; the speed of the pursuer against the craft of the pursued; the clear ringing cries of the falconer as he runs over the smooth turf—this is the sport of kings.

The Hawking Club of Salisbury Plain was first started in the early sixties by Mr. Newcombe, Col. Duncombe, Major Fisher, and Lord Ormonde. They stayed at the old Bustard Inn, halfway between Salisbury and Devizes, an inn that exists no more. They brought their hawks with them every spring, following the sport till the progress of the crops allowed no longer of its continuance. Now the Club stays for the hawking season at Shrewton.

In some places on Salisbury Plain, bordering a grass track that is yet a road from one place to another, you will see small heaps of chalk placed continuously. These are called "Down Lights," and are recognised as such by those who have to drive in the gathering dusk, for the chalk catches what light there is, and glimmers white in the twilight. For the farmer who has to drive home in the dark they are invaluable, for so long as the light of his lamps falls on these little heaps in succession he knows he is on the track. These green roads in early summer are again marked out in white; but this time by daisies. The eye can follow the down track from far, as it winds away like a loosely-flung ribbon, white against the green. At first it is not easy to see how it comes that on the spot most trodden there should be flowers,

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but it is the coarser kinds of grass on the Downs that choke the daisy plants, and in such parts only where wheels are frequent are these taller grasses kept close. Yet there is seldom enough traffic to cut or scar the land.

Close to these Down roads you may find the eggs of the Stone-Curlew, or set the little plover running all in fluff, and without a feather, while the parent birds wheel and cry beyond you, to draw attention from their young.

And it is here, on the light coloured chalky ploughed land (that surely ought never to have been cultivated?) you can pick up the "Shepherd's Crown," a fossilised Sea Urchin, or in the rabbit scratches find an empty snail shell of a pure rose pink; and in every shape, fantastic and irregular, and here and there fashioned and flaked millions of years ago by paleolithic man, lie scattered the flints: some grey as agate, or dark as forest pools, holding in their rounded cores a grotto of crystal.

Stonehenge may possibly be better seen in winter, but the Downs are at their loveliest in summer: feathery with meadow-sweet, set erect and leafless on a stem with ruby buds, or powdered with the infinite gold of cowslip that sweeten the warm air. Later on purple with scabious in the mass, or soft with a blowing host of thistle-down. Look for the chapter on thistle-down in W. H. Hudson's *Nature in Downland*, the subject is given fitting area; a chapter to itself.

The people of Wiltshire speak of preparing flints for building purposes as "knapping" the flints. This is the same word that occurs in the Psalms, "He knappeth the spear in sunder," and it means striking the stones at a certain angle which rids them of the

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chalky covering they have acquired while lying in the ground. A beautiful surface is given to walls of the manor houses and cottages where the old chequer pattern of stone and flint is used.

The mud-walling is a common feature where there is plenty of chalk marl to be found, and it is one of the oldest forms of wall structure. It is said in Wiltshire: "Gi'e un a good hat and stout boots, and a mud wall 'ull stand as long as any"; which means it must have a brick foundation and a good coping, and the wall will be impervious to the weather.

It is a sensible way to build, for your material is on the spot beneath you, and that which you take from the ground makes your walls around you, and leaves a dry cellarage for the cottage. The principle is the same as that of a swallow's nest; mud and moisture, with straw to bind it.

The chalk marl should be fairly fine, and spread on the ground in a convenient quantity, a little water poured over it, and a few handfuls of straw sprinkled on the top. It is turned with a shovel and then well mixed; and this can be done most satisfactorily by a man in a strong pair of boots, treading it up and down. After the foundations are taken out, the brick or concrete wall should rise about eighteen inches, the higher the better perhaps, so that the moisture from the ground may not affect the wall. The material is placed on with a shovel, and packed as tightly as possible. It should not be laid more than 1 ft. 6 in. in height at a time, and this is continued all along the wall in process, so that what is done has time to stiffen and to set hard.

The width of mud walls is generally 1 ft. 6 in. to 2 ft. and they are the best for cottages for they are warm in winter and cool in summer, whereas brick

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walls, narrow as they so often are, bake or chill the room within. The walls are plastered over when finished; and a flowering peach tree nailed against the warm cream colour of the chalk, and set under a good brown thatch, is as pretty a thing as you may see anywhere. There should be a volume alone dedicated to the Barns of these parts—superb buildings of nobility and worth.

Who, that loves the villages on Salisbury Plain, does not know the chalk stream or bourne, that gives its name to so many of them? which leaves its channel dry in summer, flowing full and brimming through the winter months. The grass grows in the dry bed, and the water, when it springs flows full and silent over a green bed, and so you may see the long blades of grass all laid one way in the current of it, with the silver-weed, drenched and lovely, deep in the clear stream.

These bournes flow through the villages, and are spanned by lichen-grown footways; little bridges that lead right up to the threshold of each home.

Wiltshire people have a phraseology of their own, expressing themselves clearly with many well-found and forcible words that have dropped out in the busier ways of life; for as Horne Tooke put it, "letters, like tired soldiers, fall out upon the march" and words go, too. Thus we have *nēstes* here as you find it in Chaucer, and *postēs* for posts, beside such descriptive words as "glutsh" for "to swallow."

An old house was moved, to be built again in another situation, and having traditionally been haunted in the popular mind, it did not leave its ghost behind. "Why, only last Friday—(and all the scaffolding gone, and carried too) there was such a noise in the attics, as if all the poles were being flung about. You

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could hear 'un plainly—and we not only heard 'un but Jim saw 'un, too: and there he stood, Jim says, before 'un, as big as a calf and as white as a blossom."

Of stories that tell of death-bed utterances there is hardly one that can surpass the message of George, 13th Earl of Pembroke. The folk of this county may be proud when they remember the man who spoke:
"Tell the Wiltshire people how I love them."

THE WAY

The defence which lies in boundless love of His perfection.

—*Wordsworth.*

THE purpose of meditation is to free the soul in order that it may follow its natural activity of seeking God, from which it is continually hindered by the multitude of distractions which engage the mind. To this end a means is sought whereby the mind may be concentrated on one subject, enabling the soul to use its natural powers.

This concentration of the mind is not an easy matter, because in daily life the mind is habituated to distraction, and must of necessity change rapidly from one interest to another; and until there is an inward impulse, a spiritual hunger sufficient in degree to overcome the difficulties that throng the way, there will be little inclination to follow it. Yet there is no form of prayer so illuminating to the soul, and no method which rewards more generously those who will learn it.

In meditation then, by turning all the activities of the mind inward, we free the power of the soul; and if the art is learnt, this freedom will gradually supersede the activity of the mind, and consideration will pass to contemplation; then the mind becomes the instrument rather than the obstacle of the soul.

Each soul differs from another, and so such a method as this may well be modified to meet individual needs. It offers only a suggestion of means which may be of service.

THE WAY

My desire is to the Lord.
All my running is toward Him.
This is my excellent path.

—*Solomon.*

The life of the soul is roused into activity by the power of the Spirit, in other words, by permitting the Psychic Force to flow evenly and without hindrance through the channel of our bodily senses. It is this force that gives energy, rouses to life, and inspires: but its power to operate lies entirely within ourselves. Until this truth is realised no form of prayer, and especially no form of meditation will be found fruitful, nor will the mystery of the Holy Ghost become clear. For that which the Church calls "the Holy Ghost" is, to some students of this subject, the Psychic Force for which we should, each one of us, be the perfect medium.

Prayer, or meditation, should never be entered upon without calling upon the Psychic Force or the Celestial Spirit to use the soul, or to enable it to be used, so that a clearer understanding of the Celestial Plane may be attained. Just as in the Invocation to the West Wind Shelley cries, "Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is," even so we should desire to become a worthier instrument for some divine force infinitely greater than ourselves. We must reach up to be ennobled, we must definitely require to be liberated into a wider freedom, to attain to a fuller realisation of consciousness; to become more inwardly aware.

First then, the soul who would compass this must pause for a space, striving to feel that it is brought before some Being as great as the Universe itself, "which is the woven garment that we see God by,"

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and yet One who, through deputies, extends an intense and inalienable love for each individual soul.

With wide embracing love
Thy Spirit animates eternal years.
Pervades and broods above
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though Earth and Man were gone
And suns and universes ceased to be
And Thou wert left alone
Every existence would exist in Thee.

This sense of being uplifted and brought into the presence of the divine can only be approximately suggested by some mental image. So it is useful to visualise oneself to be upon a green and sun-lit eminence, breathing deeply of a keen, pure air. Let this thought fill the mind, and let the mirrored image be held there. No words need be attempted, only let a definite effort be made to see a wide and lovely landscape while breathing quietly and deeply; let the body be wholly at rest, with folded hands.

The invocation of the Spirit never fails. Always and in every case the soul is taken and lifted higher: but the consciousness of this fact is variable; it depends on the stage of development of each individual. It is the part of each pilgrim of The Way to overcome the hindrances to this consciousness in so far as they arise within himself. This can only be done at first by a return from all distractions however often it may have to be repeated. The soul should assert again and again this one fact, that it is one with divine life, that it is higher than all fret or turmoil, that it leaves itself in the embrace of the Everlasting Arms. Those who are easily discouraged will fail at this stage, for seeming to make little progress they will consider it a

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waste of time, and so will turn away from one of the gates of Heaven, because they cannot wait until it opens, which opening depends upon themselves. At this point it is helpful to say in words outspoken:

"I know I am in the Presence of Divine Life. I know I have Divine Life within me, though I am too ignorant to realise this, but I desire to realise this: I open my mind."

When the soul has become conscious of the fact that it is raised above "all the dreary intercourse of daily life," it can pass on to the next stage. It is a mistake to pass on to this before the previous stage has been accomplished. It will be difficult to become conscious of the higher, for this is not within our own power, but we may with truth repeat within the mind at this stage of The Way that we are conscious of being placed there; because, in our full volition, we place ourselves there. This is only a verbal statement, and if it is faithfully repeated with a vivid intention towards the attainment of a fuller consciousness, in time realisation comes.

The next step is to hear the message. It is sometimes in the form of words from the Bible, or from the pages of the inspired writings of the Masters of Life while on earth; it may take the form of one of the great upstanding enunciations of the ancient prophets, or it may be a quotation from the poets, or some divine injunction or invocation of the mystics in all ages. No matter from what source the words come, at this point the message is laid in the mind. To those who have experienced this it comes to them as by a definite act—as distinct an act as it would be were one to lay a book upon a table—so distinctly is

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something from without—or, to speak more truly, *something deeply from within*, laid in the mind. With others this experience may be compared to that moment when the in-coming tide floods some small nook in the rocks, and deeply within crevices, hidden sea-anemones open ever more widely their flowers, unfolding form and colour unguessed before. They sway to the rhythm of the wave, giving while they receive. And likewise, to some minds who study meditation a message in words will be needless. It will arrive in a tide of communion that suffices and fulfils. There will be a sense of reunion that dispels all memory of suffering, and satisfies all longing; the thoughts of grief and doubt and insecurity, that fretted and delayed the soul, are washed away with all the broken ends and dust and brittleness that make the vexation of earthly life. It is truly an in-coming of the tide.

To some, however, the words of the message must be articulate, and to those it will be a help to have some words prepared; to others, words will be given.

Now let the soul repeat such words which are given it from the Books of Life (or, as the case may be, such words as it has chosen), and if while repeating the words it can retain the consciousness that it is placed before the Highest, there will be borne in upon the understanding an inner meaning to the words.

The message may have different meanings or applications, according as they may be needed in different lives, or at different times in the same life; it is always the Invisible Helpers who will choose the inner meaning or closer application of these words; for there are those about all who address themselves towards the fuller life whose work it is to guide; and

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such words as are found by the student to be "laid in his mind" at this juncture, these he may rest assured are indeed revealed or chosen as the case may be by these Invisible Helpers, who are the deputies of God and our soul's friends.

There are those with us that within the halls
Of our clear purposes and high endeavour
Keep their white festival.

Not of the Earth are they,
Yet all their being is of Earth's Essences. . . .

But how are we to explain that it is for the pilgrim to be aware of these before they can minister?

"What I gave I had." Before receiving we must give. More than half of the failure in any attempt to find security in religion arises from the attitude of mind in those who seek. It is for us to develop ourselves. We must open the door as well as knock upon it. At first, possibly, this can only be done inadequately, but use will strengthen endeavour: or perhaps the seeker is so blind and weak, he does not even see the Door. Then turn once again to the help of a mental image. See yourself with both hands holding a little, only a little of the immensity of the Sea, but say to yourself *"I hold it in my hands."* Visualise the light upon the waves, breathe in the pure air, feel the firm ground beneath you. In doing this say to yourself, *"I blend my will with that of the Heavenly Father: I return like a river to the Sea: I desire to lose myself in the Ocean of Life, and to respond to it. I recognise in my innermost His Infinity."*

The test by which the oblation of the will can be proved is our action. Whether we live our lives consonantly with the inner light will tell us whether our

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will was, or was not, in this moment of spiritual exercise truly offered to God; it is essential to progress in development that we should live in active Good-will.

From the invocation of the Spirit the soul may pass on to resting in the thought of the humanity of Jesus.

The mind, in order to possess itself of the right angle of vision, repeats silently a chain of words. Now words have become more than sound through the ages they have been in Man's service. They have become psychometrised. That is to say, they have acquired a force just as stones acquire through the years, moss upon them, and the growth of lichens. In this sort of spiritual moss lies the power of words, and it is from this truth a superstition arose of there being certain words to conjure with, words of magical potency. This is a good instance of the coarse distortion that superstition imposes on a truth; for a frame of mind, or condition of being, is only resultant from a word being uttered, because, through the Ages certain words have been used to express certain qualities or because certain frames of mind have prevailed and induced them. So, to return to the invocation of the Spirit, given the mind of the student is in a quiescent state of receptivity, it is a profitable proceeding to pronounce slowly, and to savour inwardly, a chain of good words; because it puts his mind in touch with good conditions. Each word in this chain is the name of a spiritual quality, one of the Fruits of the Spirit, and as each word is repeated, let it be seen as a hewn stone that is definitely laid among its fellows to uprear and defend. This is to build the spiritual walls, and each word is spoken in praise and recognition. This is done in contemplation of the Humanity in the Divine.

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“ Courage, Fortitude and Faith, Love, Gentleness and Security; Patience, Kindness, Joy, Willingness and Service. Hope and Health, and Devotion, Thankfulness, Light and Peace. Strength, and Clearness, and Constancy, Truth and Life.”

Let these words be said slowly and separately, with a sense of quiet leisure, and let the mind rest in each one as it is spoken and be conscious of the rhythm of the whole. Let there be an accompanying acknowledgment that all these divine qualities *are ours*, for this is allowing the mind to rest in the thought of the Humanity of Jesus, and with it goes a great outrush of love towards a Master who perfected in himself while on Earth our imperfect nature, and who, if we open our ears and set our hearts in the right direction, can make us whole.

The response to this outgoing of the cabined spirit is very comforting. The consciousness of union with the Divine is immediate and without hindrance, because it is our home. You may describe this sending forth of the will by saying that it is a state in which the soul is not concerned about its own welfare nor what it may receive, but only desires that Good or God should manifest within it. The soul in such meditation does not intercede for others or petition for itself, but only in desiring God, it includes these lesser activities within the greater, and causes itself to be a stronger vehicle for divine immanence. It constitutes itself a point of contact with the Over-Soul.

In this realisation of Unity it will confidently exclaim,

O God within my breast
Almighty, ever-present Deity,
Life that in me has rest
As I—undying life—have *power* in thee.

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It is this "power" that the practice of meditation can make ours. It is worth striving after, for it is the only defence. It is from within ourselves that teaching must come. Compared with meditation, prayer is noisy. For one soul that exclaims, "Speak Lord! for Thy servant heareth," there are ten that say, "Hear Lord! for Thy servant speaketh," and there is no rest for these. We are living in a time when people must become more and more acquainted with the super-sensible world, if the life of their soul is to become equal to the demands of ordinary life upon it. The first step towards power is to rid us of ourselves; to sweep wide places in our being, and—however active a great part of our life may be—to dwell inwardly.

Then we shall be whole.

Now may Jesus Christ, who on Earth loved converse with those who sought Him, draw our souls to practice spiritual development and may we persevere in it until we carry the Light. May we be brought to such union with the celestial that we may perceive through the heaviness of the earthly senses the joy and finer life of Spirit, to our liberation and the welfare of our fellow-men.

THE SINGING OF BIRDS

the small fowls jargoning
—*Chaucer.*

THERE are two reasons to account for the difficulty we find in describing the songs of birds: one is that those who listen intelligently to the birds' songs hear them so differently, and the second is that the birds themselves, individual birds of one species, in a certain degree, vary.

This is true as to the actual notation. The design, or what may be called the plan of the song of each species is more constant; and it is to this one should bend one's attention if one wants to learn the song of a bird. You must get to know the shape of its song, the plan of it, if you are to disentangle it from the chorus.

In Doctor Garstang's Introductory Essay to his book called *The Interpretation of Bird Music*, there is much original remark and good observation. He suggests that a clearer appreciation of the significance of the songs of birds would be arrived at if the bird nature were more closely considered and compared with that of man. He points out there is much in common between birds and men. "They are warm-blooded little creatures, warmer even than ourselves, and accordingly independent to a greater extent even than we are, of purely climatic restrictions. They conquered the air for locomotion long before us, and far more effectively, facts which give them an independence of place and time far superior to our own and ensuring for them considerable spells of leisure, which they devote to elevating forms of recreation. They are bipeds, and hold their heads

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up in the world. They have an educational system of a simple but effective kind based, as ours is rapidly ceasing to be, on family life and parental responsibility. Lastly they have an æsthetic sense and express their emotions in song and dance and displays of finery." The same writer thinks that birds, æsthetically, are probably somewhere near the level of primitive man, and that by birds' songs we may be enabled to retrace some of the steps by which primitive emotional cries were transformed into the beginning of artistic music.

The unity or pattern of a bird's song is characteristic of the species, and this characteristic type again dominates the songs of variants of one species, so that however greatly the songs of birds of different nature vary, yet if they belong to the same species, the type song is clearly recognisable. As for instance with the Tree-Pipit; you hear its song full of individuality, yet you can "taste skylark" in it, so to speak; they belong. Just as you may recognise some Robin in the song of the Dunnock. Birds have acquired to themselves names and sentences, little bits of human speech from the sounds of "their sweet jargoning." The Whip-poor-Will of America, and the "Why did he do it?" bird, the small Indian heron who gives that plaintive cry, these names explain themselves, and find instant acceptance, and are far more descriptive than phonetic renderings. A verse, the metre of which gives the arabesque of a bird's song, and the words its assonances, is well suited to convey a true idea. Take "the Lark's Song" by Charles d'Orleans for instance:

La gentille alouette
Avec son tire-lire-à-lire
Et tire-lire-à-lire

THE SINGING OF BIRDS

Tirelirant tire
Vers la voute du ciel,
Puis s'en vol vers ce lieu
Vire
Et désire dire:
Adieu Dieu!
Adieu Dieu!

That is exquisite. It gives the Lark's song in form as well as sound. Again an image, a figure of thought that represents the impression that a bird's song makes on the mind, gets one near to it. Take the Golden-crested Wren. If you can think of a small rill of clear water travelling quickly down an incline till it reaches a point when it must cast itself—a little jet of crystal song—into silence; and then the whole tiny ejaculation repeated again and again among the warm pine-needles; if you can visualise this, then you will have got the plan of this bird's song into your mind, and will have secured it for habitual recognition.

Again, with the Corn Bunting. You cannot reduce that plain bird's featureless utterance to a series of hyphenated letters with any near result; but if you think of it as produced by the grinding of two pebbles together till they triturate their gritty sides, then you get very near it indeed. There is something in the Corn Bunting's song that is dull and clumsy. It is like his careless way of flying with his legs left hanging down—a shiftless habit.

Gilbert White said he had a Thrush in his garden that called "White-hat, White-hat"; Bird-lovers know well that the Thrushes in Spring speak of themselves as "Ludovic" and "Judy."

It is a pleasant story that tells of the school essay in which a child had written that a Thrush said "Mrs. Hewitt, Mrs. Hewitt" so often and so clearly in their

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village that at last Mrs. Hewitt came to her door and said "Yes."

One can match this with the account of the loved abode that has its garden so close about it that the Nut Hatches can be heard hammering most intimately, so that it is on record that once a drowsy guest murmured "*Come in.*"

These lines bring the Thrush's song more clearly than a cacophony of sound:—

Pretty knew it, Pretty knew it,
Come and see, come and see,
Cherry sweet, cherry sweet,
Knee deep, knee deep,
Pity *you*, pity *you*,
To me! to me! to me!

Dr. Garstang has some happy touches in the naming of his themes. Notably, "The Jewel Song" of the Garden Warbler. That is very good. The song of the Garden Warbler is like a handful of rubies, warm and glowing in the sun, turned over and over again in the narrow compass of one's hand.

He speaks of the Chaffinch's "Roundelay," but it is too hurried, too direct in its rapid pelt of utterance strictly to suggest a round. And should he speak of the Dunnock's song as a warble? It is too high, too sharply defined for that. A warble is something low and gurgling, rich and warm.

The song that Dr. Garstang chiefly fails in is that of the Tree-Pipit. He gives those high, keen, shouting notes that are the close of its wing song—as "*Pe-sée, pe-sée, pe-sée*"; here the accent seems entirely faulty, for this bird brings his song to an end with four or five clear notes that say "*Sear, sear, sear.*"

He calls the Wren's utterance a trill; now anything so ear-piercing, so sudden, so dominating, so

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buoyant, so calculated to enforce instant attention—in short, to make the welkin ring, seems to merit some other term, but one is at a loss to suggest it.

The Wren is like the story of the little tailor in Grimm's folk-lore tale, who told people that he had killed "seven at one blow"; and such was his manner and general demeanour that everyone thought he meant seven giants, till it was known it had been seven flies. That is the Wren entirely.

The Blackcap is not mentioned in these pages; perhaps the author, with an artist's true perception, thought this were a matter better left alone?

Like the Gipsy who sang at the Castle Gate,

And O, but he sang sweetly!

The leddy stepped doon the music to hear.

He sang so varra completely.

The Blackcap sings like Johnny Faa, and when that is said there seems little more to be said about it.

Charles d'Orleans is not the only poet who has shown us bird speech in verse. There is "The Thrush" by Tennyson, a clear strain of Spring music, and some exquisite lines by Winifred Hoper, which show conclusively, that with fragments of human utterance you can get much closer to the heart of bird-notes than in a series of phonetic sounds, however closely matched they may be. I am grateful to her for letting me place them here.

Par un jour d'orage, aux nuages menaçants,
Par la bruine et la bise, sous un ciel ingrat,
Mille êtres joyeux, et de foi rayonnants,
Font hommage au soleil qui ne rayonne pas.

Bon petit! Bon petit! Bon petit!

Si! Si! Si! Si!

J'y suis, j'y suis—suis—suis—la Grive!

Dis donc, dis?

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Qui va la?—Qui!
C'est l'Avril—vril—vril—vril qui arrive!
C'est lui! C'est lui!

Le moineau, lui
Aussi
Travaille,
—Tatillon,
Frétillon—
A trip—tripoter,
A chip—chipoter
Avec ses brins de paille.

Le merle—à flute fine—
De son sommeil profond,
A l'ombre du buisson
Eveille l'aubépine;
Et tout doux, tout *doucement*,
Le rou—cou—coulement
D'une tourterelle
Fait rêver la Belle
Qui dort—au Bois dormant.

Et l'Hiver, monstre dur, écoutant en mourant,
Les chansons du monde ailé,
A bénir ouvre la main, et de ses doigts gelés
Laisse échapper le Printemps.

WILLIAM BARNES

A CORRESPONDENCE published this summer in the *London Mercury* held interest for those who care for the poetry of William Barnes. It touched on the unusual metre of his poem called "Woak Hill." The distinguishing parts of this metre are not only the assonances, but the hidden rhymes. It is of Persian origin, a form called the Pearl, because each of these hidden rhymes is set in a line, as a bead may be strung at intervals on a knotted silk forming a continuous string.

Another Persian metre used by Barnes is the Ghazal. It also has a rhyme followed by an assonance at the end of the concluding lines, but unlike the Pearl it is a couplet not a four-lined metre. One of Barnes' poems composed in this form consists of a series of four of the plainest statement of facts set in a pleasant list of country see-ings. It is as simple as its name.

GREEN

Our Summer way to Church did wind about
The cliff where ivy on the ledge was green.

Our Summer way to town did skirt the wood
Where shining leaves in tree and hedge were green.

Our Summer way to milking in the mead
Was by a brook, where fluttering sedge was green.

Our homeward ways did all run into one,
Where moss upon the roofstone's edge was green.

"Lowshot Light" is another poem in the same form. Like all the best of Barnes' work it is filled

SHEPHERD'S CROWNS

with serenity. It sheds a spirit of quietness most comfortable in these noisy days. These country poems are free from conventional phrase. They have nothing to teach. They start simply with the assumption that writer and reader are going to enjoy observing together, a quantity of quite common country sights and simple happenings; and with these pleasant things, "listed" as it were by Barnes, and recorded in one of his exquisite measures of hidden rhymes and balanced sound values, the result is very good. Original too; for not many writers would tell of "cow by cow"; yet it falls into place when Barnes is doing it. It is a very fresh, a very kind sort of writing.

As I went eastward e'er the sun was set
His yellow light on bough by bough, was bright.

And there, by butter-cups beside the hill
Below the elm-trees, cow by cow, was bright.

While after heavy-headed horses' heels
With slowly rolling wheels, the plough was bright.

And up among the people, on the sides,
One lovely face with sunny brow, was bright.

And for that single face, the bough, and cow,
And plough, in my sweet fancy, now are bright.

Barnes' verse is not widely known, and probably those who do know it hardly appreciate the technical skill of his work because of the apparent simplicity; but as a fact, his study of metre was thorough and covered a wide field. Professor Palgrave, in lecturing in Oxford in 1887 took Barnes' poetry for his theme, and dwelt on his peculiarly rhythmical style and his knowledge of prosody.

WILLIAM BARNES

It was at the instigation of Palgrave and Coventry Patmore that Barnes was persuaded to write a volume of poems "in common English" as they are described on the title-page. It is the collection from which I am drawing the lovely poems I give here. The one Barnes calls "Meldon Hill" is written in a metre slightly altered from a Welsh Bardic form, called "the Hir a Thoddand" or "the long and melting measure." The rhyme to the penultimate line is set in the middle of the last line instead of at the end.

I took the road of dusty stone
To walk alone, by Meldon Hill,
Along the knap with woody crown
That slopes far down, by Meldon Hill.
While sunlight over-shot the copse
Of underwood, with brown-twigged tops;
By sky-belighted stream and pool
With eddies cool, by Meldon Hill.

And down below were many sights
Of yellow lights, by Meldon Hill.
The trees above the brindled cows
With budding boughs, by Meldon Hill.
And bridged roads, and water-falls,
And house by house with sunny walls,
And one, where somebody may come
To guide me home, by Meldon Hill.

The interest Barnes took in form led him to make many experiments in rhythm; alliterative verse written on the principle of old Teutonic poetry; also the Terza Rima. In alliteration, could you find a more satisfying example than this?—

By dipping Downs at dawn of day
Or dewy dells when daylight dies.

Unless it be these lines—

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By morning meads or mid-day mound
Or mellow midnight's mounted moon.

By winding ways on wandering wide
Or wilder waste, or wind-blown wood.

These exquisite couplets each close a stanza in the poem called "A Wish Fulfilled"; and not quoting it in full let me outline the trend of it, for the conclusion is so endearing. He speaks of when he was young and "his longing wishes wandering wild" went beyond the good he had; and rightly so, for this led him to acquire more and his work brought him in its daily earnings, and he paid each man "his call on him for lawful pay." Beyond this, his simple possessions grew in such measure that he acquired a sheltered home where he—

had lofty trees to sway
Where western wind may roar
Against their bowing heads, to play
The softer 'round my door.

Where once he walked he now bestrides his nag—

A cunning jade that now would find
Out all my roads if I were blind.

And further, he tells that he has sufficient to make all those who dwell around him happy, and finally he shows how he can bless his own sacred hearth with simple joy bringing home for his little son some fairing, or "dolls to make the children's happiness"; and the whole thing concludes with this description of these very dolls:

With limber limbs all lopping loose
Or leaning low in little laps.

WILLIAM BARNES

Pretty, and again pretty.

His verse is filled with images of things clearly seen and therefore told in vivid phrase. Take this as an example:—

The ox with sleek hide, and with low swimming head.

and this again—

And the sheep little-kneed, with a quick dipping nod.

Doesn't that give the short pecking action of the sheep? and such a line as this: "And the bird's thin cries by tangled boughs," brings with it the bare hedgerows of a winter landscape.

Where evening smoke rose grey
While dells began to miss the light of day.

That gives you the very smell of early dusk in November.

"The Mother's Dream" is too well-known to quote here; its consummate art lies in its simplicity and so it is entirely characteristic of its writer. I don't know any other poet who could have written it, except perhaps Southwell. There is another poem in this volume which deserves to be equally well-known. It is called "The Wind at the Door."

As daylight darkened on the dewless grass
There still, with no one come by me
To stay awhile at home by me
Within a house now dumb by me
I sat me still as evening tide did pass.

And there, a windblast shook the rattling door
And seemed, as wind did moan without
As if my Love, alone without,

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And standing on the stone without,
Had there come back with happiness once more.

I went to door, and out from trees above
My head, upon the blast by me
Sweet blossoms there were cast by me
As if my love had passed by me
And flung them down, a token of her love.

But no . . . too soon my fond illusion broke;
No comely soul in white like her,
No fair one, stepping light like her,
No wife of comely height like her,
Went by, and all my grief again awoke.

That is extraordinarily desolate.

It is like the gust of wind it tells of, but it does not only sweep past the door. It is a gust that storms the lintel and blowing into an empty room, puffs up the dust of dead ashes on the hearthstone.

ON DREAMS

TO those who have the power of dreaming, life is the richer. We do not speak of that type of dream where time is passed as it might be at a railway station, where hurry and confusion and jostling find place; where people are two and the same person at once and all is a crazy drama of involved absurdity. This dream has no place here. It is of dreams of a far different nature that we would write, such dreams as, crossing the hempen homespun woof of life, enrich it with rare dyes, or confirm to our spirit's solace, a belief in an unseen world.

There are those people whose dreams are the panorama of the landscape of their own lives. They have dreams that in a language of symbols, fantastic, poetic or otherwise, are a running commentary on what they themselves are thinking or enacting at the time. And to these dreamers there comes an ever increasing power of comprehension. They are the interpreters of their own dreams; but these will tell you that their dreams are as a rule synchronous, and rarely prophetic. Such dreams may share the definition Hartley Coleridge gave of experience: "The light of a lantern set in the stern of a boat, illumining the path we leave behind us."

There are the dreams of aerial movement, when we float, barely with the exertion of volition, light as thistledown before the wind; dreams in which our happy bodies forget all care; when we are propelled and sustained as by that breeze "that bears the blue butterfly more rapidly than its wings." And there are those dreams of reunion, when the Shining Ones

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of Beulah are in our sight; when, with a joy that has but its semblance here, we spend long hours in some silent communion; when we feel that all our thoughts, and hopes, and longings are at length made known, at last are understood and cherished; when craft, and interference, and cruelty, and corruption are for ever entombed in the sea; and Time ceases because everything is believed and forgiven, with shining eyes that tell it as we dream.

Life we may see, metes out the same measure in different form. Joy for instance, may be divided and handed round among many, as solidly as any plum-cake. Happy folk these, and the character of their countenance attests it. But those who meet joy otherwise, who find it, let us say in dreams, ask these if they have wherewith to make complaint or lamentation?

There are many who have knowledge yet no experience of this inner life; like Heathcliffe they are conscious of some spiritual alienation. They notice the teasing of the fir bough on the window pane, but they hear no moorland voice beyond it, though they would give the world to feel that little icy fist grip theirs in the wind without.

Then there are the dreams of dream-scenery. Where else are the hills so full and rounded, the grass so deep and green? Where else shall you find trees so lofty, such plenitude of leaves?

The nectarine and curious peach
Themselves into my hands do reach,
Stumbling on melons as I pass
Ensnared in flowers, I fall on grass.

The sense of abundance in these lines brings in some measure dream-scenery before us, and having

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had one such dream, remembered vividly on waking or unfolding with a growing rapture of conviction through the day, having had one such dream you may confront the petty ills of life unheeding. You may have to order the dinner, or to fasten your trunk, you may have to consult Bradshaw, or even dwell with untoward friends; but there all the while, as through some great open window, is the dream-scenery, yours for the looking.

We constantly discover how impossible it is to tell our dreams. We have dreamed perhaps some marvellous narrative, with incidentally colossal effects. The lights still cross and recross the arena of our mind; we still find the grandeur, the amazing subtilty, the precision of the whole; but how are we to put it into words? It is to try to build a three-decker with a few matches and a bit of string.

A child once dreamed that it was wandering in a great country. The sun was setting, and every blade of grass was yellow in the lowshot evening light. The child was unhappy because every one it had known was dead, and in its dream it knew it was the only creature living. At last, lying down at full length upon a grave, it cried so long and so utterly that it awoke. "What an abnormal child!" you may exclaim, "How unnatural!" Yet that child climbed trees, played cricket, and hated lessons as heartily as any other through the day. We are mistaken if we believe all children have this inner life, but some have, and they rarely tell it.

The vividness of dream-scenery is matched by the poignancy of dream-tears, those dreams in which we hold no mastery over our sorrow; when we stand before an overwhelming sense of woe; when we seem

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to face something for the first time that we have nevertheless known since beyond the beginning of Eternity. And it is in these dreams that we exert every fibre of our being to attain some object, only to realise we have perhaps at most, brushed an acorn from the path.

In the Norse Legend the god Thor must exert his utmost strength to drain a goblet; and he finds he has lowered the wine a hair's breadth in the bowl; but this goblet was a magical goblet and communicated with the depths of the sea, and his thirsty strength had been in conflict with an ocean. So we, in our dreams, often treat of slender issues, but the very foundations of the world seem involved.

Then there are the dreams of mystery. In these our minds are oppressed with the weight of some responsibility it lies with us alone to sustain. We circumvent and negotiate indefinitely the power of some malignant and advancing force. These are the dreams in which the world is in collusion against us, when people whisper behind doors out of ear-shot, or blank their faces suddenly when we appear. They hurry by with a manner of grave import the nature of which we only nervously suspect; and we waken teased with apprehension, vaguely combating a nameless fear. There are the dreams of excelling, dreams of our own paramount success. When our words flow with the rivers, one with them in volume and resource; from the dark rock-set pools of indignation to the far-reaching current of argument that brooks no let or hindrance in its course. How great we are in these dreams; how the world stands and gazes at us! So strong has been the truth—or the illusion—that it is strange to find it fade into the light of common day. There is almost a physical effort needed of readjust-

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ment, a putting ourselves once again into that landscape in which we are walking all the time. It is as if Perseus were asked to lay his winged sandals by, and take to the highroad.

Then what of the poetry we read or write in our dreams? the music we hear, the fields we see, the laughter, the delight—who shall take this from us, this light that never was on sea or land? Yet, “joy and woe are woven fine, a clothing for the soul divine,” and nowhere so closely as in our dreams are these two blended.

Of the three great dreams in literature, one has already been touched on here and it is the one that I would place highest.* In the fifth book of the *Prelude* there is Wordsworth’s narration of his dream, and this I would place next in excellence. It is the passage in which he describes the appearance of the mysterious Arab mounted on a dromedary. The Arab holds in his hands a book and a shell. The whole thing is charged with the essential quality of the dream condition, from the gentle opening full of rest and calm that is gradually permeated by the insinuating inroad of vague distress. The narrative continues till the culminating touch of terror. There is the loud cry of the dreamer that is heeded not a whit, followed by the awful flight “hurrying from the fleet waters of a drowning world.” All this is of the actual stuff of dreams; one recognises it instantly.

And the third great dream? Shakespeare tells that it took place in the Tower of London, and puts it in the mouth of Clarence:

Methought that I had broken from the Tower
And was embarked to cross to Burgundy,
And, in my company, my brother Gloucester

* In the third chapter of *Withering Heights* by Emily Brontë.

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Who from my cabin tempted me to walk
Upon the hatches: then we looked toward England
And cited up a thousand fearful times
During the wars of York and Lancaster,
That had befallen us. As we paced along
Upon the giddy footing of the hatches,
Methought that Gloucester stumbled, and in falling
Struck me, that sought to stay him, overboard,
Into the tumbling billows of the main.
Lord, Lord! methought, what pain it was to drown!
What dreadful noise of waters in mine ears!
What ugly sights of death within mine eyes!
Methought I saw a thousand fearful wrecks,
Ten thousand men that fishes gnawed upon,
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearls,
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels
All scattered in the bottom of the sea.
Some lay in dead men's skulls, and in those holes
Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept
As 'twere in scorn of eyes, reflecting gems,
Which wooed the slimy bottom of the deep
And mocked the dead bones that lay scattered by.

* * * * *

Oft did I strive
To yield the ghost, but still the envious flood
Kept in my soul and would not let it forth
To seek the empty, vast and wandering air,
But smothered it within my panting bulk
Which almost burst to belch it in the sea.

Awaked you not with this sore agony?

Oh, no, my dream was lengthened after life,
O, then began the tempest to my soul
Which passed, methought, the melancholy flood
With that grim ferryman which poets write of
Unto the kingdom of perpetual night.
The first that there did greet my stranger soul
Was my great father-in-law renowned Warwick
Who cried aloud "what scourge for perjury
Can this dark monarchy afford false Clarence?"

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And so he vanished : then came wandering by
A shadow like an angel with bright hair
Dabbled in blood, and he squeaked out aloud :
" Clarence is come, false fleeting perjured Clarence
That stabbed me in the field by Tewkesbury ;
Seize on him, Furies, take him to your torments ! "
With that, methought, a legion of foul fiends
Environed me about and howled in mine ears
Such hideous cries that with the very noise
I trembling waked, and for a season after
Could not believe but that I was in hell,
Such terrible impression made the dream.

There is no comment adequate to follow such a passage. It belongs to " the high order of things " ; and, as Fitzgerald said of Gray's *Elegy*, " is written among the stars forever."

We dream of strife, love, death, warfare, torment, fear, delight and wonder, but how often do we dream jokes? I only know of two instances of what—with the utmost leniency—might possibly be placed under that heading. There is the case of the man who dreamed that he was arguing with a friend. Nothing he could say made any impression, every argument he brought forward fell useless before the granite of his friend's opinion, and the sense of cumulative vexation grew almost unbearable, in that intensifying climate that is of the dream-state. At last his exasperation broke bounds and he exclaimed in his dream : " It's no good—I give it up—you display such astounding ignorance. And I tell you it's more than ignorance! It's pignorance."

Rightly was he pleased with the word when he awoke.

And the other case is that of the woman who dreamed she was walking in the garden at home, with her children, and as they walked they looked back at

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the house among the trees with its old stone tiled roof, and the cottage-end which is the thatched wing of the building. She thought she said: "That is really two houses you know, and what is more, they each have a name, and I'll tell you them they are called *Jack Straw and Wat Tyler*."

Thus she dreamed; and when she awoke—loan-bold!—(as we say in tabloid) there was something in it. It wasn't just utter nonsense; but "Kate-a-whimsy, John-a-Dreams." I wish we had more dream-jokes and less dream-striving.

Children know well the curious states of the dream-condition; and can describe them often forcibly. A child once said to his mother: "I had long strong dreams last night. It was like living a very loud picture."

Yet with all the stress and tumult that colour and twist our dreams let us remember there do occur sometimes those rare and perfect orientations of the mind, that arise, no doubt, from some psychic condition. They translate the Dreamer far beyond his normal ken. He is "caught up" to the seventh Heaven, affinitised for a space "to the abode where the Immortals are."

And all my days are trances,
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy dark eye glances,
Are where thy footstep gleams,
In what ethereal dances,
By what eternal streams.

THE STORY OF JOAN OF ARC RETOLD

JOAN OF ARC was born on 6 January in the year 1412. Her father was John d'Arc, and her mother's name was Isabella Romée. They lived in a small village called Domremy, and earned their livelihood by labouring in the fields. Joan went with her sister to school in a little house that you may yet see at Domremy, and her father's house yet stands, its garden touching the churchyard.

Joan was very gentle in her ways, and very simple and truthful. Everyone loved her, for they saw how kind she was. She was industrious, and she helped those who worked with her. During the day she would drive the cattle to pasture, or taking her place beside her father, she would help him in the field, rough though the work might be. At other times she helped her mother in the house, and in the evenings she would sit quietly and spin. In such wise did Joan live, passing the early years of her childhood:

An angel-watered lily that near God
Grows, and is quiet.

One summer's day about noon, when she was thirteen years old, she was in the garden and she heard a voice speaking to her. At the same time she saw a great light. Then the vision of an angel appeared, and in her heart she knew it was a divine messenger.

"Joan," the voice said, "you must go to the help of your country. You must go to the Dauphin. It is

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for you to see that he goes to Rheims to be consecrated before being crowned."

Joan said, "How shall I arm myself, or know how to lead men?"

Then within her spirit she knew the angel answered, "God will help you."

Now from this day forward Joan's heart was often stirred within her. The consciousness of her mission was to increase more and more. She would often leave her companions to walk alone, wondering in what way she was to play her part, and unseen voices would speak to her. These voices spoke more and more urgently.

"The danger to your country is great," they would say. "It is you who must save your country. It is you Joan, who must save your country and your King."

She often thought deeply how best this great task should be undertaken; and at last she decided to make a journey to see the Lord of Baudricourt at Vaucouleurs. When there she intended to ask him to give her an escort to take her to the King; but she did not speak of this to her parents.

She went to Bury to her uncle Laxart, and told him all that was in her mind. Her heart glowed in her speech so that she carried all before her, and her uncle even promised to take her on her way.

But when they arrived at Vaucouleurs it was to find scant welcome. Joan told Baudricourt that she came from God, and her message was for the Dauphin. "Let him hold himself in readiness," she said, "for God will certainly help him before Lent is over. God wishes him to be crowned, and crowned he shall be, despite his enemies; and it is I who am destined to bring him to his coronation."

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"The girl is mad," said the Lord of Baudricourt; "send her back to her village," and Joan returned to Domremy; but she could not stay there. The unseen voices were always urging her; she could not rest. So she went back to Baudricourt to see if she might not meet with a better reception; and this time she remained.

Soon it became known far and wide that one Joan of Arc, a young girl from Domremy, was making her voice heard. She held the attention of those in authority, she would not be gainsaid. It is she who is to save the country, people said; she is even to go before the Dauphin. She is an emissary from God. She will walk if she can go in no other way, and if her feet fail her, she will travel on her knees.

The imagination of the people is a force easily influenced; a crowd is impressionable, at once warm-hearted and fickle. In history you will find that whenever the help of the people has been enlisted, whether it be for good or evil, it is seldom that they have failed to respond. And now, in the case of Joan, the people all believed in her; they were strongly moved by her great faith.

A young man, called John of Metz, offered to conduct her to Chinon, where Charles VII, the Dauphin, was then living. People collected money to clothe and arm her. They bought her a horse, and mounted her little band of followers. But the Sieur de Baudricourt did not change his opinion. "Let her go her crazy way," he said. "Let her go, and she will see what will come of it." But the villagers gathered around her, calling out as she passed by, "Joan, God bless you."

It was a long and dangerous road to Chinon. Those who had sympathy with England held the country

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through which she journeyed. Certain points at which the travellers had to touch were actually occupied by the enemy, so that it was necessary for Joan and her little band to travel by night, remaining concealed throughout the day. Some of those who accompanied her became frightened, and spoke of returning to Vaucouleurs. But Joan said to them: "What do you fear? God guides our journey. They that be with me tell me what I shall do."

After twelve days Joan and her followers arrived at Chinon. She had written a letter to the King announcing her arrival. The Court of Charles VII was much divided in opinion as to how she should be received. La Trémouille, a great favourite of the day, was jealous of the interest Joan's story had already awakened. She was determined she would not allow the indolent mind of the King to be roused from the careless life he was leading. They called Joan, mockingly, the young Prophetess, and for two days they discussed whether the King should receive her at all. But just at this moment some despatches arrived from Orleans; and these despatches contained news of so disturbing a nature that some members of Joan's following obtained permission for her to have her will.

So it happened that one night, by the light of fifty torches, surrounded by countless unknown faces in one of the great rooms of the Palace, she was given admittance to the King. The lords and ladies of the Court pressed round her. In order to distract her attention, Charles VII had clothed himself in a dress far less rich and ostentatious than that worn by his courtiers. He had left his throne, and stood among the brilliant throng. Yet, although Joan had never before seen

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the King, she went straight to where he stood, and kneeled before him.

"I am not the King," he said to her, for he thought in this way to test her; "the King stands there"—and he pointed to one of his courtiers.

"You are the King, Sire," she said, "you and no other. I come in the name of God to command that you be consecrated and crowned."

She spoke very quietly. She told him it was God who sent her to help him, and she asked of him sufficient forces that she might raise the siege of Orleans, and then lead him to Rheims.

The King hesitated; she might prove to be a witch. He thought it were best to send her to Poitiers, there to be submitted to a council of doctors, and to an examination by an assembly of the great prelates of the Church.

For three long weeks they teased her with questions. They set hard theological difficulties before her, and they quoted the writings of many learned and profound divines.

"There is more in God's book than in any of your volumes," Joan said. "I am ignorant, and your knowledge is held from me, but nevertheless I know I come from God." And she stood up suddenly, with so great a spirit in her two clenched hands, that she overthrew the little wooden bench behind her, because of the great vehemence in her speech.

Then they said tauntingly, that if God wished to save France he had no need of soldiers. But she answered, "Men must fight before God can give the victory."

Now Joan's words, and the fame of her, had spread so widely that at Poitiers, as at Vaucouleurs, she had all the sympathy of the crowd. The people held her

to be inspired; and so high ran the feeling that both the cautious opinion of the doctors and the prejudiced views of the prelates were as nothing to the enthusiasm of the crowd.

The military forces were quartered at Blois, and to this city Joan went, followed by the Duke d'Alençon, Field-Marshal de Boussac, the Lords de Rais, de la Hire, and de Xantrailles. She bore a cross embroidered upon her banner, taking this ancient symbol as her device.

She addressed her soldiers before going into action. She told them to put away all unworthy thoughts from their hearts, and by prayer to set their minds at rest; and on the following Thursday, 28 April, her little army set forth. Joan led the procession, her banner floating in the wind. She wanted to march straight to Orleans, but it was considered more prudent to go by the left bank of the Loire. The army and transport arrived at Chécy, two miles above Orleans. They had to cross the Loire, and there were not enough boats for this. So Joan crossed with only a part of her following; the remainder had to return to Blois in order to reach Orleans by Beauce, which was the name then given to the part of the country lying between Seine and Loire.

When Joan arrived at Orleans, she said to Count Dunois, who had arrived there before her: "I bring you the best help of all, for I bring you the help of God. Remember it is not I alone that am helping you, but with me are the souls of those great leaders, Saint Louis and Charlemagne, who still hold France dear in their remembrance."

Joan entered Orleans at eight o'clock, and was escorted through the town by torchlight. She had a great reception. The people thronged around her in

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so great a crowd that she could scarcely make her way through them. Men, women, and children crowded round her, anxious to touch if it were but her bridle, the horse she rode, or the hem of her white garment. To an onlooker it must have seemed as if a god had descended among mortals, so great was the feeling manifested.

Joan spoke tenderly to those who crowded around her. She promised to save them. Then she asked of them to show her the way to a church, for she wished before all else to give thanks to God, who had so far furthered her.

An old man said to her: "The enemies are strong, and they are so well armed; it will be a difficult matter to unseat them."

"But there is nothing impossible to God," Joan answered. The very strength of her faith enheartened those around her. Even the people of Orleans, dismayed and fearful as they had been, were restored to courage. They wanted to attack the enemy at once, and destroy their fortifications. Dunois, however, advised otherwise. He thought it were better to await the arrival of the relieving force. Joan meanwhile appealed to the enemy to return quietly to their own country, but she appealed in vain.

There was no news of the relieving force quartered at Blois. Dunois, becoming anxious, went with a small detachment to hasten them; and indeed he went none too soon. He found the Archbishop of Rheims, Regnault de Chartres, had gone back on his original decision, and was on the point of ordering the troops to return to their several garrisons. Dunois prevailed in dissuading him from doing this, and himself conducted the troops to Orleans.

On a Wednesday, 4 May, surrounded by the priests

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and dignitaries of the town, and followed by a vast concourse of people, Joan left Orleans. She crossed the English trenches and advancing in a long procession she met the little army led by Dunois, and joined forces with these. Under her protection she led them all safely back to camp. The enemy, perhaps amazed by the sight of an army protected by priests and led by a young girl, did not attack the French forces.

Later, on the same day, while Joan was resting, she started suddenly from her sleep. She cried out as if in some troubled dream: "My people need me! O, I see their blood darkening the ground. Why was I not roused? I must help them." She armed herself quickly and leaping to her saddle, she made at full speed for the Gate of Bourgogne. The sparks flew from her horse's hoofs as she galloped.

She found an attempt had indeed been made without her knowledge to regain the fort of Saint Loup. The attempt had failed, and the French were retreating in disorder. Joan rallied them and led them in renewed attack upon the enemy. This time Talbot, the English general, tried in vain to withstand the French. Joan had dismounted and at the foot of the ramparts cheered on her men; and at last, after three hours of desperate fighting, the fort was recaptured by the French soldiers.

Joan returned in victory to Orleans; but on her way she had to cross the battlefield, and all the joy of her success could not steel her heart to so pitiful a sight of suffering. She covered her face with her hand, and wept.

Joan had now to decide how it were best to follow up her newly-gained advantage.

The generals, disliking to be led by a village girl, and above all being most unwilling to share the hon-

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ours of victory with her, met in secret to discuss their plans. But Joan appeared to be aware of all they were doing, and attended the meeting to take her part in this council of war. The Chancellor of the Duke of Orleans attempted to deceive her, as they found they could not intimidate her; but Joan's determination and courage never failed. Her contempt of their subterfuge was magnificent. "You may conspire as you like," she said indignantly, "and you may arrive at what conclusions you choose; but I will come to a yet greater decision. While you have been in your council chamber, I have been in mine, and it is the council of God that shall be followed, for it is that alone that shall stand. You must rise early to-morrow, gentlemen, for there is much that is incumbent on us. There is far more to be taken in hand than I have as yet compassed."

On the following morning, 6 May, Joan recaptured the Fort des Augustins.

On 7 May, at daybreak, the French troops commenced storming the Fort des Tournelles. Joan went down into the trenches. She was placing a scaling ladder against a parapet, when a bolt from an arbalast pierced her in the shoulder. She drew the bolt out, and when those who were tending her offered to say a charm over the wound, she refused, saying she would rather die than benefit by that which God had never sanctioned.

She kept vigil, and prayed far into the night while her troops rested; then, giving the word of command to recommence the attack, she flung herself into the forefront of the battle.

She cried out to the storming party, urging them to renewed effort: "The day is ours! Make for the breach!" and the fort was taken, the garrison anni-

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hilated, and the French once more occupied the left bank of the Loire.

On the following Sunday, the English were found to be in line of battle on the right bank of the river. Joan forbade the renewal of hostilities. She held divine service with her troops, and when it was over she asked how the English were stationed; were they facing the French camp? She was told they appeared to be moving in the direction of Meung.

"Let them go in peace, then," she answered. "It is not God's will that we should fight to-day."

The town of Orleans, which had been in a state of siege for eight months, had been relieved after four days' hard fighting. The great news spread far and wide, and Joan's position was established. She was regarded by one and all as the inspired emissary of a divine cause. And now she was free to turn her mind to her great project. While the Dauphin yet remained uncrowned she could not linger, and setting aside as gently as she might the devotion and gratitude of the people of Orleans, she made the utmost haste to return to Chinon. She wanted to take advantage of the great wave of enthusiasm, and in the full tide of popular feeling to lead the Dauphin to Rheims.

This time her appearance at Court was attended by the fullest honour. The King received her in state, but refused to accede to her request to follow her. He accepted to the full her services, but it was far from his intention to let anything heroic disturb by so much as a ripple the even surface of his idle life.

It was decided that the ceremony of consecration should be deferred, and Joan was to return to attack such positions as were still held by the enemy on the right bank of the Loire.

On the 11th of June the French occupied the sub-

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urbs of Jargeau. At dawn on the following day Joan would have given the word to open hostilities, but the Duke d'Alençon demurred. Joan, however, never wavered. "My lord Duke, it were best we go forward, believe me, this is the hour decreed! Let us be up and doing, for God helps those who help themselves."

Her word was followed, and Joan led the assault. A stone was cast from the ramparts while she was climbing a scaling ladder, and it struck her on the head, flinging her violently to the ground; but she quickly rose, calling out, "The day is ours! the Lord has delivered our enemy into our hands!" and with the quickening force of her confidence she inspired her men. The ramparts were stormed, the English, hard pressed, were pursued to the very bridge of the town, and there they were either slain or taken prisoner. The Earl of Suffolk was taken, and on the 15th the French occupied the bridge of the town of Meung.

On the 16th they laid siege to Beaugency, and the town was re-captured on the following day.

On the 18th Joan pursued and overtook the English near Patay; they were led by Talbot and Falstaff.

"We must fight," said Joan, "for it is God's will we should prevail over our enemies. Our gracious King shall to-day have the greatest victory of all."

She placed herself among the foremost, but for this once they persuaded her to stay behind, and La Hire was given charge of the expedition. He was to attack the enemy in order to give the main force time to arrive on the scene of action. But the violence of La Hire's onslaught was so great, that when Joan arrived with the rest of the troops, she found Talbot, the

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English general, had been taken prisoner, and the enemy had retreated in disorder.

The English lost 4,000 men, and 200 prisoners were taken. All who were unable to pay a ransom were put to death.

Joan sorrowed as much for her enemies as for those among her own people who were wounded. She saw one of the enemy lying grievously stricken, and she leaped from her saddle and kneeled beside him upon the ground. Then, seeing he was dying, she held his head upon her knee, and fortified his soul with words of comfort.

Throughout the war she endured greatly; she was often wounded, yet never would she use her own sword. Her banner was all she carried.

On the 16th the King entered the town of Rheims at the head of his troops, and the following day the ceremony of consecration took place in the Cathedral. An immense concourse assembled, gentle and simple, and Joan of Arc stood behind the King, her banner in her hand. "It has seen the sharpness of Death," she said, "it is right that it should be honoured."

When Charles VII received from the Archbishop Regnault de Chartres the sacred oil and the golden crown, Joan knelt at his feet in profound emotion.

"Sire," she said, "now is the will of God fulfilled, that I should bring you to your city of Rheims to receive the crown and consecration, in sign that you are verily the King, and that to you, by right, belongs the throne of France." It is of this scene we read in an old document called "*La Chronique Ancienne*": "All those who saw her at this moment were more than ever sure that here indeed was an inspired messenger of God."

"O God, do Thou bless the people," cried Joan,

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seeing the mighty enthusiasm among the crowd, "do Thou bless them for their goodness! When I come to die, may I be buried here."

Indeed, the sight was one to fill the heart to overflowing. The people's devotion to Joan knew no bounds. They thronged to kiss her hands, to touch her raiment; they brought little children to be blessed by her. It was as if they felt the least touch of her hand brought blessing. Yet all this did not spoil Joan. She would speak to the people gently, telling them not to give her the honour, for all the glory should be given to God. She loved the people. She had pity for all who suffered, but it was the people of the crowd who had her love. She felt she was one of these; she had been born in the same surroundings.

Later on, the charge was brought against her of having received too much adulation. She replied: "It is true many people came to kiss my hands; it seemed to be their pleasure to do so. But it was the poor—it was the crowd who loved me."

Now that the King had been crowned, Joan wished to return directly upon Paris and retake the capital; but the King's indecision was to prove Joan's worst enemy; for while he was hesitating, the English were given time to make good their defence. When Joan, hampered by his inveterate indolence, succeeded in at last bringing up the French troops to the siege, the attack was repulsed, and she was wounded by an arrow in her thigh. Even then she would not give in, and it was by main force she was borne from the fray. On the following morning the King opposed the suggestion of renewing the attack, though Joan was confident of success. Charles was too weak a vessel for the measure of his destiny, he was unequal to his high task, he had no further thought than as soon as might

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be to resume his life of leisure in the castles of Touraine.

Joan had yet another adverse force to contend with, and this was the jealousy of the Court favourites. Content to live with soul so dead, they used all their influence with the King against her, and dealt the first severe blow to Joan's ascendancy. Till now she had seemed in the eyes of all to be infallible. The success of her arms had never even been threatened. At the outset her splendid energy had quickened even the King, inspiring his narrow soul to share in some degree her spirit; but now she saw him sink back from her grasp into his habitual lethargy, and it was as if she realised now, for the first time, that she might fail.

She withdrew from Paris, and taking her armour, her helmet, and her banner, she dedicated them anew upon the altar in the Church of St. Denis. For a long time she knelt in prayer. She knew now, in her inmost soul, that her glorious mission was ended, that only grievous trials awaited her, and that she must drink the cup to the dregs.

She rose, and followed the King and the Court to Gien, only to find that the army had been disbanded. In the opinion of the courtiers there had been enough fighting; it was high time they thought, to put an end to the influence of this Maid of Orleans.

But it was not in Joan's nature to condone sloth. If the King would not stand by her, she would stand alone. She realised to the full she could hope for nothing from so miserable a character as that of Charles, for he had abandoned her during the siege of Le Charité, though it was well within his power to have helped her.

At the end of March in 1430, without so much as

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taking leave of the King, Joan left for Lagny. She intended to join the companies of certain partizans of France who were skirmishing against the English in that part.

The crowd still loved her. It was not in their hearts to forget all she had done. They gathered in silence in little knots and groups around her, showing by their mute sympathy a compassion too deep for tears.

It was Easter time, and Joan was in a church praying. She had been leaning against a stone pillar for a long while, silently, as if her spirit were very sorrowful within her. She said to those who stood round her: "I have been sold and betrayed. I shall soon be delivered to my enemies. Will you pray for me? For you see my strength is done. I have no further power to help my country."

Power terrestrially it may be she no longer possessed, but over doubt, difficulties, disaster, even over death, so great a spirit as Joan's must always rise triumphant; and her days of fighting were not yet finished. On 23 May, while she was at Crespy, she learned that the town of Compiègne was narrowly surrounded by the English and Burgundian forces.

She put herself at the head of a small troop and entered the town on the 24th, at the break of day. Taking with her some of the soldiers who were guarding the town, she attacked the Burgundians. The English however came to their assistance, and the French were forced to retreat. In vain Joan tried to rally them. "Defeat or victory lies within ourselves," she cried; "it rests with you if the enemy is to be defeated." But she no longer had the same power with her men, and she was borne along in the general rout of the French forces.

SHEPHERD'S CROWNS

Once upon the ramparts of Compiègne, they found the portcullis raised and the drawbridge lowered. Nevertheless, below in the trenches Joan fought on. Then some of the enemy closed around her, bidding her surrender.

"I have sworn faith unto a greater than you," she said, "and my word I keep."

But it was in vain; caught by her long garments she was dragged from her horse and taken prisoner. From the high ramparts of the town the Lord Flavy, Governor of the town of Compiègne, looked down upon the scene, and witnessed her capture; yet he did nothing to help her, though it was within his power to have sent a force to her relief.

Joan was taken to Margny, amid the triumph of her enemies. The English generals and the Duke of Burgundy were all alike desirous to get a sight of the Witch, as they called her, for all her former victories had been attributed to witchcraft. But when she was brought before them they wondered; could this be a witch, this young girl who looked so like a child?

Joan was the prisoner of John of Luxembourg, one who was prepared to make the most of his prize. It is almost impossible to believe that the French King did nothing to help her. He never so much as made an offer of ransom.

Joan was imprisoned in the castle of Beaurevoir. She was aware that the English wished to buy her from the Duke of Luxembourg, and she knew also that the fortunes of the French had changed, and the town of Compiègne was about to capitulate, and this made her doubly anxious to escape. So one night she slid down the steep walls of her prison, clinging on as best she might to a rope-ladder, which gave way beneath her weight. She fell headlong to the ground,

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and lay as one dead beneath the prison; but her hour was not yet come; a harder death was to be her destiny.

Her persecutors now formed a rough tribunal presided over by Cauchon, the Bishop of Beauvais, to inquire into her case. Joan had nothing but her simplicity wherewith to meet the insidious questions of the judges.

"I came from God," she would say; "but indeed I have nothing more to do here. Send me back whence I came."

At the close of November she was sold into the hands of the English.

This time she was imprisoned in the castle of Rouen and watched night and day. She had to bear the jeers of the soldiers, who were her gaolers, and she was put in chains.

Through all this time of suffering there remained to her one unassailable refuge. It was the ministry of the Unseen. The more hemmed in she was by cruelty and sorrow, the greater access did her spirit find towards God.

This comfort never failed her. Voices that had at first inspired her to action, now spoke to her of peace. In the darkness shining forms appeared to her, and through the tumult of rude voices she was aware of the ineffable stir of unseen companionship.

One day the Bishop Cauchon asked Joan to tell him what she saw.

"They waken me, with their great Light," Joan answered. "And then I join my hands together, and I pray to them to succour me. Then they answer saying my help shall be of the Lord."

"And tell me further," said the Bishop, "of your visions. What else have they said to you?"

SHEPHERD'S CROWNS

"They have exhorted me to courage, that I should have fortitude in the presence of mine enemies."

And when they would have pressed her still further with their questioning, she cried out suddenly: "O, I can tell you no more. How should I make *you* understand? Though you may punish me for my silence, I have less fear of displeasing you than I have of hurting by so much as one word of mine them that be with me."

One day, Stafford and Warwick and Jean de Luxembourg came to visit her where she lay in her cell. And Jean de Luxembourg, mocking her, said he came to ransom her, on condition she vowed never after to bear arms against the English King.

"God tells me you are deceiving me," Joan answered, "for I know well you have neither the power nor the will to do as you say. Furthermore, I know the English will put me to death, for they think, by so doing they will be able to possess the kingdom of France. But I know of a surety that if they were stronger by a hundred thousand men, yet France shall not be theirs."

Her words infuriated Stafford, who would have slain her on the spot if the other generals had not held him.

One day when Joan was returning under an armed escort from the Judiciary where her trial was proceeding, she passed a church. The door was closed, and she begged of the monk in whose charge she was, to let her kneel for a time in prayer outside it; for those in authority over her, seeking how best they could grieve her, no longer allowed her within the precincts of the House of God.

But when this came to the knowledge of Cauchon,

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the Bishop, he threatened her guard with the most rigorous punishment if such a thing were ever permitted again.

Now the patience of the English was fast becoming exhausted. They considered the trial was being unnecessarily prolonged.

They accused the lawyers of not fairly conducting the case.

Once again Joan was taken before the prelates and high dignitaries of the Church to make her defence, and a vast assembly gathered to hear her.

"I sought out the King," Joan said, "because I had a message for him, and the message was from God, who sent me. And in fulfilling this, I have but obeyed the voices of the blessed Company of Heaven. To these, and to no less a tribunal do I submit myself, in all that I have done, and in all there yet remains for me to do. You constitute yourselves my judges; but if you judge me, have a care, lest you set yourselves in great danger, for I am of God."

And while she spoke these words, as if standing alone upon a rock with so cold a sea of unfriendly faces round her, suddenly the sun shone out, flooding the room with light; and striking full on the stone mullion and transom of the window, cast upon the floor the shadow of a cross.

* * * * *

Joan was condemned to death. They called her heretic, apostate, witch, idolatress; and as such they decreed she must meet her death at the stake in the Old Market Place of Rouen.

On 30th of May they led Joan to execution. When she reached the pile of faggots she kneeled down and prayed.

SHEPHERD'S CROWNS

In some books that tell Joan's beautiful story they say she asked for a crucifix, and among all the crowd assembled to see her die, one man bound two pieces of wood together, and gave them to her; and he was an English soldier.

We, as a nation, were her enemies, though not so deeply as were those of her own country who worked her fall; and we may remember this English soldier and be glad.

At the moment of her death it is said a strange spirit stirred the multitude. The judges who had passed sentence on her were filled with dread.

"It is a saint who has been burned," the people said, and many fled the place.

Thus died Joan of Arc, but her story will live as long as there are human hearts to know it.

CHAUCER

A pebble for a mighty cairn.

CHAUCER is a poet whose writings people either know well or else very little, for he is hedged about by the wall of archaic English. Those to whom this presents little difficulty can reach back through the ages that have passed since Chaucer was alive, and in the large quantity of work he has left behind find themselves very close to him. It is the only way in which we can approach him, for with Chaucer, as with Shakespeare, we know little about the facts of his outer life.

Literary controversy has swayed backwards and forwards upon this theme with small result beyond affording a few students the quiet pleasure of attempting to prove each other wrong. The knowledge of Chaucer's birth remains inexact, so that we do not know his age when he died, but it is supposed to have been some time between 1340 and 1345. The generally accepted date of Chaucer's death is October 15th, 1400, and there is no reason to doubt its accuracy as no pension was paid to him later. His life thus covers little more than the interval between the most glorious period of Edward III's reign and the downfall in 1399 of Richard II.

The image we bear of him in our minds shows us a hooded dark-robed figure with grey hair and divided beard, a string of beads in one hand, the other extended as if in admonition or narration, and with what he himself describes as a "penner" or pencase suspended from his belt. This is from a portrait by

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Occleve, and it is found in an early copy of Chaucer's poems, painted from memory after Chaucer's death. Over the figure is written in the same hand-writing as the other poems the words, "Chaucer's Ymage"; a word pleasing in appearance, spelt with a Y.

The allusions to Chaucer by both Occleve and Gower are loving tributes.

This landës very tresour and richesse,
First fynder of our fair language.

Lydgate, who lived in the next generation, casts no light on the facts of Chaucer's life, the discovery of which have become antiquarian's puzzles, but he gives a valuable list of his poems; valuable in so far as it sets such as he mentions beyond the power of pedants whose busy care it is to deny to many Chaucer's authorship.

My master Chaucer with his fresh comédies
Is dead alas, chief poet of Britayne,
That sometimes made full piteous tragedies,
The fall of princes he did also compleyne
As he that was of making sovereigns,
Whom all this land of right oughte preferre
Sith of our language he was the lode-starre.

* * * * *

Some of disporte, including great sentence
In prose he wrote the Tale of Melibe
And of his wife that callèd was Prudence,
And of Griselde's perfect patience,
And how the monks of stories olde and new
Piteous tragedies by the waye told.
He made the Boke of Canterbury Tales
When the pylgrymes rode on pylgrimage
Throughout Kent, by hilles and by dales,
And all the stories told in their passage,
Enditing them full well in our language.

CHAU CER

In these verses by Lydgate of which I have quoted only two, although there is a long list of poems by his master, there is nothing that can bridge over, or fill, the many large gaps in our knowledge concerning so much of his life.

George Brandès, in his work on Shakespeare, finding so little external evidence to his hand, has built round the central figure the England of Shakespeare's day. This is accomplished in a sufficient manner, so the reader, as he follows the author in an illuminating study of Poems and Plays feels satisfied, because his mind is steeped in the atmosphere of the period of which he reads. So Brandès' two volumes on Shakespeare must stand as complete achievement, and the last word upon the subject with which it deals.

Just such another book, though smaller in volume, is that recently published on Chaucer by Lilian Winstanley, M.A. The authoress is lecturer in English in the University College of Aberystwith, Wales. She presents here the Prioress' Tale and the Tale of Sir Thopas, with an introduction and chronological tables of Chaucer's life and his poems. It is excellent work, covering a wide field in the history of events, and dealing with the manners and customs of the time, besides presenting a fresh and masterly study of Chaucer. She writes:

"Chaucer belongs to the main stream of European thought and is not insular. The tale of Troy concerned the origins of both Rome and Britain; Virgil and Geoffrey of Monmouth and many others narrated how fugitives from Troy had laid the foundations of Western civilisation, and Chaucer is concerned with that legendary material which binds England to the Continental system rather than with that which differentiates it.

A really great poet can scarcely be produced except in a great age. However original a man's genius may be, he requires a vigorous and powerful society to provide him with his material

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and a genuine breath of inspiration to kindle him into flame. Chaucer, though he seems from our distance to stand so much alone, was, in reality, the product of such a distinguished age and was himself only the most eminent among numerous contemporaries."

The fourteenth century was a period of revival both in England and on the continent. The first breath of the Renaissance was already kindling Italy and France; the arts were reviving; great political and social changes were taking place and great religious changes were rapidly becoming inevitable. It was an age of unrest and upheaval, but also of fresh, vigorous and abounding life.

The England of Chaucer's day was a small England, though "an England with a mighty heart." The total number of its inhabitants is given as two millions and a half. Four great pestilences had visited the country in 1348 and in 1361 and again in 1369 and 1375. At least one half of England's population had been swept away. The plague was called this "foule deth of England" in a formula of execration in use among the people.

Chaucer is said to have been of gentle birth and born in London. By some he is supposed to have been educated for the law, by others for the Church; but nothing is positively known until 1359 when he himself tells us he was in the army with which Edward III invaded France. He was taken prisoner there during the expedition which closed with the Peace of Chartres in 1360, and the old documents tell us that the King paid £16 for Chaucer in ransom.

His wife's name was Phillipa, daughter of Sir Payne Roet. She was one of the demoiselles in attendance on the Queen. It is thought, that she may have been related to the Swynford family. Chaucer

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was one of the gentlemen of the King's Household.

In 1372 Chaucer, being one of the King's esquires, joined in a commission with two citizens of Genoa to treat with the Duke, citizens, and merchants, of that town for the purpose of choosing some port in England where the Genoese might form a commercial establishment. This by itself would have little interest for us, but it may have been that whilst he was on this expedition, he visited Petrarch in Padua, and learned from him the Tale of Griselda that the Clerk tells in the Pilgrimage to Canterbury.

I will tel you a talë which that I
Learned at Padua of a worthy clerk
As provëd by his words and by his worke.
He is now dead, and naylëd in his cheste,
Now God give his soule wel good reste.

Francis Petrarce, the laureate poete,
Highte this clerke whose rhetorique sweet
Enlumid all Ital of poetrie
As Linian did of philosophy
Or laws or other art particulere.
But Deth, that will not suffren us dwellen here
As it wer in a twynelynge of an eye,
Them both hath slain—and so alle shall be dye
But forth to telle of this worthy man
That taughte me this tale

There is that which touches the imagination in the thought of great minds meeting; we catch the glow of this in the essay written by Hazlitt in the volume named *Winterslow*. An essay that describes his first meeting with Wordsworth and Coleridge.

"On my way back," Hazlitt writes, "I had a sound in my ears, it was the voice of Fancy. I had a light before me, it was the face of Poetry. The one still lingers there, the other shall never quit my side."

SHEPHERD'S CROWNS

We are moved when we read of the meeting, in Mr. Murray's house in London, of Scott and Byron; and we feel it exceptionally and are proportionately touched when we read of Goethe's journey right across Europe to meet Byron on his way to exile, just to hear his voice; and when, in the far away annals of a poet of Chaucer's date we can on such sound testimony link together two illustrious men such as Petrarch and Chaucer, the thought warms the heart, and there follows a "mounting of the mind."

Chaucer must have been a diplomatist of high standing, for he appears so often to have been chosen to go on embassies abroad; for these he was given wages according to the old documents, wages of such queer little sums; "£26 13s. 4d., for being in the King's service abroad," is one entry.

Richard II was growing violently autocratic, and Parliament, overthrowing the Earl of Suffolk, forced upon the King a Council controlling the administration of affairs. This Parliament of which Chaucer was a member, had to face the opposition to which every reforming Government is exposed, and subsequently in one month, Chaucer lost both his Controllerships, the explanation possibly being that he failed as an adherent of John of Gaunt. Chaucer was probably thrust into the 1386 Parliament by John of Gaunt in order that he might do his best against the attacks that Parliament made on his master. Chaucer represented Kent, where Gaunt had very large interests. Perhaps it was during this season of political jeopardy that Chaucer may have written his well-known poem in praise of retirement "Great reste stands in little businesse." I give it here, with the spelling slightly modernised.

CHAU CER

Flee from the press and dwell with sooth-fastnesse
Suffice thee thy good though it be small
For horde hath hate, and climbing tikelnesse
Press hath envye, and weal is blent over all.
Savour no more than thee behove shall.
Do well thyself that other folks can't rede,
And truth thee shall deliver, it is no drede.

Peyne thee not each crocked to redress
In trust of her that turneth as a ball.
Great reste stands in little besynesse,
Beware also to spurne against a nail,
Strive not as doth a crock with a walle.
Daunt thyself that dauntest others dede.
And truth thee shall deliver, it is no drede.

That thee is sent receive in buxomnesse,
The wrestling of this world asketh a fall,
Here is no home, here is but wilderness,
Forth pilgrim! forth beast out of thy stall!
Look upon high and thank God of alle,
Waive thy lust, and let thy ghost thee lead,
And truth shall thee deliver, it is no drede.

During Chaucer's life, waves of insurrection and unrest swayed the English people. The land was full of faction and discontent. The sad thought that speaks throughout Langland's "Vision" has but one expression, it is ever the sorrowful sighing of the poor.

John Balle put forth his just, but inflaming doctrine that since worthiness was not to be found in the holders of either temporal or spiritual authority, of either ecclesiastical or lay wealth, then the time had come when the poor man should take his own. Serfdom's cup of bitterness overflowed, and the revolt turned with especial fury against the possessions of the Duke of Lancaster. In one passage, Chaucer expresses his sympathy with the thralls.

SHEPHERD'S CROWNS

Those that be yclept thralls be God's people,
For humble folk be Chryste's friends,
They be familiarly with the Lord.

Doesn't this recall George Herbert's lines?

Man is God's image, but a poor man is
Christ's stamp to boot; both images regard . . .

Let me quote once more from this excellent book
I have already referred to.

"Langland is not, like Chaucer, a devotee of the idea of chivalry; he shares Chaucer's view sufficiently to consider that the chivalrous orders are much better than the ecclesiastical, and the Knights altogether finer people than the monks and friars; but he perceives the unpractical side of the long pilgrimages and the religious tournaments; he shows the poor tenants at home squeezed for money to pay for these journeys, a prey to unscrupulous agents and victimised by the rapacity of highway robbers and bands of wandering marauders; the knight should put down such malefactors; but he is absent, and the 'Roberd's men' thrive.

He shows the idleness of the monks and the nuns, the roguery of friars and summoners, and the insolent effrontery of the pardoner; and he adds, on account of their laziness, 'a bitter anger against hermits.'"

"Piers Plowman" is a long religious allegory divided into separate versions. Langland represents the world as a place of pilgrimage where all men are seeking the truth. Many false guides stand forth offering to lead men to truth; the real guide is found in the form of the Plowman, Piers (no doubt the same name as Pearce found so commonly in South country villages to-day), the hard working, simple and unassuming man upon whose labour the whole foundation of society ultimately reposes.

Langland expresses powerfully the social unrest as it existed in the 14th century. He is the voice of

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all that questioning, that sadness, which ultimately rose to the surface in the Peasant's Rebellion of 1381.

These were the days of the wide high collars, the long red peaked shoes, the garments punched and shredded in outrageous array that one knows from pictures of the time; and though the gaudy image of the young squire as shown us by Chaucer, endears him,

Embroidered was he, as it were a mead
All full of freshest flowers, white and rede—

and though we may look back on the England of that day and see it vivid in its show and splendour, yet it gives one pause to read that ostentatious display rose to such a pitch as to cause men to abandon hospitality and charity, since their purses could not bear the claim of all. This thought, and the cruel stress of the poor, the helplessness of the hinds, whose cry goes up in Langland's great poem shows this brilliant array as bright with the prismatic hues of corruption; and the mind shrinks from imagining what the heavy cloths, the brocades and padded silks of those days must have covered. Surely it redounds to the credit of Ninon de l'Enclos—(or was it Diane de Poitiers?)—who, probably unique in her generation, bathed every day.

Wycliffe had sent out among the people his simple priests. These were not itinerant preachers but definitely established in the various parishes, and they shared the want of the suffering populace; this was in great contrast to "the paunchy prelates" whose craft and unspiritual lives Chaucer was never tired of denouncing.

SHEPHERD'S CROWNS

He writes of some holy man in orders:

For smalle tithes and smalle offering
He made the people piteously to sing.
For e'er the Bishop caught them on his hook
They were writ down in the archdeacon's book.

Some people say that Chaucer was a Wycliffite and they have strong evidence on their side in these lines describing a Wycliffite priest:

A good man was there of religion,
And was a poor person of a town,
But rich he was in holy thought and werk
He was also a learned man, a clerk
That Christe's gospel gladly wolde preche.
His parisherns devoutly would he teach;
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent
And in adversité full patient.
And such he was i-proved ofte sithes
Full loth were him to curse for his tythes
But rather would he given out of doute
Unto his poor parishioners about
Of his offrynge, and eek of his substance;
He could in litel things have sufficance.
Wyde was his parish and houses far asunder
But he ne lefte not for rayne nor for thunder.
In sicknesse, nor in mischance to visit
The farthest in his parish, much and lite
Upon his feet and in his hande a staff.
This noble ensample unto his sheep he gave
That first he wrought, and after that he taught.
Out of the gospel he the wordes caught
And this figure he added it there to
That if gold ruste what should yron do?
For if a priest be foul on whom we trust
No wonder if the common man do rust,
And shame it is if that a priest take keep
A schiten shepherd and a clean sheep.
Wel ought a priest ensample for to give
By his own life how that his shepe should live.

CHAU CER

And though he holy were and vertuous
He was to sinful men nought despitous,
Nor of his speche dangerous ne digne
But in his teaching discreet and benigne.
To draw folk to Heaven by clean-nesse
And good example was his business.

But if were any person obstinate
What so he were of high or low estate
Him would he snub sharply for the nonce
A better priest I trow there never was.
He wayted after no pompe or reverence
Ne makèd him a spicèd conscience,
But Chryste's law and his apostles twelve
He taught, and first he followed it himself.

That is excellent descriptive verse. Chaucer had met that man. He probably knew him as typical of the band of nonconforming preachers whose sincerity stood out in such marked contrast to so many of the priests, holding high places in his day.

De Quincey writes of Chaucer :

"At this hour, 500 years since their creation, the Tales of Chaucer are read familiarly by many in the charming language of their natal day, or by others in the modern versions of Dryden, Pope or Wordsworth. Tales never equalled on this earth for their tenderness."

And many of the lines in the Man of Lawes Tale are full of this tenderness.

This messenger a-morrow when he woke
Unto the castle held the nextway,
And to the constable he the letter took
And when that he the piteous letter say,
Full ofte he said "alas! and weladay!
'Lord Chryste,' quod he," how may this world endure,
So full of synne is many a cre-a-ture.

* * * * *

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Weeping both young and olde in all that place
 When that the King this cursed letter sent,
 And Constance with a dedly pale face
 The fourth day toward her ship she went
 Nevertheless she takyth in good entente
 The will of Chryste, and knelyng on the ground
 Sche said: " Lord, ever welcome be thy sonde." *

* * * * *

Her litel child lay weeping in her arm,
 And knelyng, pityngly to him she said—
 " Peace, litel son, I will do thee noon harm,"
 With that her kerchief of her head she braide
 And over his litel yghen sche it layde.

* * * * *

Then follows a beautiful passage of invocation; a passage wherein Constance, with a noble selflessness, deliberately turns her mind away from her own calamity to think of a sorrow greater than her own. For, she argues to herself, Christ's mother had to see her Son die, whereas she has but to leave " her litel son " among strangers; her child still lives. And then she turns to the Babe and says:

O litel child; alas! what is thy guilt,
 That never wroughtest synne as yet, pardie;
 Why will thy harde father have thee spilt?
 " And mercy, deare Constable," said she,
 " And let my litel child here dwell with thee.
 And if thou durst not saven him for blame
 So kys him oones in his father's name."

* * * * *

Long was the sobbing and the bitter peyne
 O! that the woeful heart mighte cease.
 Great was the pité for to hear them pleyne
 Through which plaints gan there woe encrease.
 I pray you all my labour to release!
 I may not tell all her woe unto morrow,
 I am so weary for to speak of sorrow.

* message or will.

CHAU CER

I know well the scholars will be wrathful at my spelling Chaucer's lines as best they may be read; but I shall do it nevertheless. I want more people to enjoy these beautiful stories. I think I am justified in this particular tale especially, and I believe that many will agree that it is legitimate to modernise the spelling, when I tell them that the country of *Syria*, the arena of all poor Constance's sufferings, the place of her exile, described as so far away, and so vilely barbarous is consistently rendered as *Surrey* in the text.

And now the beautiful tale is brought to an end; and it is a story that ends happily. The closing lines fall upon the ear infinitely quietly, and sink into the heart like a blessing—

Fare now well! my tale is at an end
Now Jesu Chryste that of His mighte may send
Joy after wo, govern us in His Grace,
And keep us all that ben in this place.

As well as being one of England's greatest poets, Chaucer was soldier, Esquire of the King's Household, Envoy on numerous foreign embassies, Controller of the Customs, Clerk of the Works, and Member of Parliament.

One thing is certain, his genius was fully appreciated by his contemporaries. It is written that he suffered from poverty "That hateful harm, condition of povert," but a pleasing poem called by Chaucer "to his emptie purse," was sent with an envoy to the King, and this apparently set the matter right, for Henry IV at the end of the poet's life increased the poet's pension.

So many have written and spoken of Chaucer's love of Nature that it needs hardly allusion here.

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Yet isn't it this that keeps his poetry so vital; which lessens so much the difficulty which would otherwise lie in the old strange spelling, and which, as one reads, so greatly refreshes the soul?

When he tells of the familiar things, those things that Wordsworth calls "a temperate show of objects that endure"—things of eternal loveliness that cannot be smirched or hindered by any of the ways of men; when he gives one the sense of the clean rain in one's face, and the scent of the newly turned earth about one, then the distance of time when such lines were written is set entirely at naught. One stretches back, and it is hardly an effort to touch hands with one who could write so lovingly of Nature, whom George Herbert calls:

That vicar of the Almighty Lord.

Chaucer is buried in Westminster Abbey; and in 1556, a man named Nicholas Brigan erected a large tomb in his memory, which stands in the Poet's Corner to-day.

THE SIX WORDS OF ASSURANCE

THE Dreamer found himself at the opening of his dream turning round from the key-board of a piano, having just concluded playing the final chords of a piece of concerted music. He was in a large room panelled in natural elm. The room was of great size; there was a large open fireplace with a piled fire of burning logs that lit and warmed the further end. It was furnished very little except for large and comfortable seats covered in deep rose colour that were placed against the walls. The room appeared to him empty except for four or five people gathered round the fire at the further end, and one woman, who he knew to be his Godmother, was seated beside the piano talking to him.

"I had no idea it was I that have been playing," he said. "I never knew I could play this." He pointed to the piece of music by Schubert on the desk before him.

"You have been playing here from time to time for six years now," she replied, "so you have improved. You are asleep, and you come here and play the music while you sleep. There are a great many people here to-night."

"Who have I been playing to?" the dreamer asked; the room seemed almost empty to him.

"You have been playing to the Dead," she said, "for there are Dead here as well as upon the Earth; 'death' or 'life' are conditions of the soul. That is

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why what you know as 'sudden death' is no death at all. You have shown you know this in not believing those who were killed in the War to be dead, or even far away."

"Have I been playing to those?" he asked.

"No, indeed; they do not need it; most of those are transcendently alive. Music with us is *for the Dead*; it is given to them in order to see if they can hear it."

The Dreamer was still marvelling over the music he had just played and exulting in the sense of joy the sound left within him. He felt tingling with life. "How did I play this?" he said, again turning the pages of the difficult score before him.

"Every one who lives in their sleep can do easily what in waking their body prevents them doing," she replied.

"Have I been coming here for six years without knowing it?"

"That is a short time," she answered; "some people never know they come here till they come here to stay."

"Where is here?" he asked.

"Everywhere," she answered.

The Dreamer sat in silence. He could not speak. The sense of excitement and achievement was still surging within him, and he thought of one whom he had loved, who had been killed in the War; and inwardly he thought "*he* felt this joy." Just as if he had spoken aloud, the woman said: "Because you have been working here for six years you have been able to know intuitively in your waking hours, how he fared. The first person he saw on waking here was you."

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"But I am alive—I mean in the body."

"Yes; but he slept till you were asleep, and so you were able to be with him here, when he awoke."

The Dreamer felt wonderfully happy; too happy to speak.

"People who have a large sleep-life when they are on Earth," she went on, "although they may not remember it, are nevertheless rested and taught by it, and in hours of stress and pain it is their strength."

"What did I here before I played music?" he asked.

"You were with the children," she said.

He thought she meant this figuratively, till she said: "People go to the work they like best, or are sent to it if they do not find it for themselves. There is no uncongenial employment here."

"Where are the children?" he asked.

"In the large Nurseries attached to the Summer Gardens," she answered, and she said it as casually as if she were saying the Edgeware Road, or Kew.

"All the slum children are here every night; those who are cold and hungry and neglected, all day long. The children people are accustomed to speak of as having no proper childhood at all. They have a glorious childhood here. Every night they have everything a child longs for—toys, flowers, and food. When music cannot raise our Dead often the Nurseries and Gardens cure them, as there is so deep a climate of life there from the accumulated contentment of the children, that it is especially invigorating."

"You are constantly alluding to the Dead," the dreamer said, "as if they needed curing, as if they were ill."

"What else!" she answered. "The people I speak

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of are the *only* Dead. There are thousands of them here; and as for your world! Nevertheless, with you there is greater excuse for finding difficulty in telling the living from the dead, because the bodily senses hear, feel and see, even when what is heard, felt or seen is not comprehended. Now here with us, if a piece of music is not understood, it is not heard."

"But the music," he said, "I have been playing to-night?"

"Well, if they heard it, they are getting better," she said briskly. "A great many heard it to-night. Understanding is life."

"Where did I go before I went to the Nurseries?"

"You did not leave your body; somebody read aloud to you while you slept. If you had been born into an unhappy home it would have been different; but you did not need to leave your body in your childhood."

"Then, every one who is unhappy is really comforted?" he asked.

"Every one," she said with emphasis; "healed, fed, enlightened, comforted, loved and forgiven; or we could not live at all. You and I are both of us at this moment in Paradise."

"I hope I shall bring back memory of this," he said. "I hope I shall remember."

"You must see the Interpreter," his Godmother replied, "and then I think you will remember."

"Who is the Interpreter?"

"He is a man who lived on earth long ago in the time of ruffs and pointed bodices. He spends a great deal of his time in looking after an old man here, and he brings him when there is music to try and help him. But the old man hardly hears it now at all, and

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he is reconciling himself to the idea that he will have to die the Second Death."

"Shall I see this Interpreter?" the dreamer asked.

"I don't know whether you can."

He thought she meant that the person they spoke of was busy and could not be with them, but soon he understood. The person she spoke of was close to them and he began to see him. After a while he saw him more distinctly. He saw him in the room as one sees a piece of ice in a glass of clear water.

The Dreamer on waking, could not recall this conversation consecutively, but phrases were in his mind that kept repeating themselves insistently, and he wrote them down, just as they are here given.

"The death of cold is better than the death of pitch; the death of pitch clogs and defiles. The death of cold only arrests and suspends for a season."

"Pitch-dead people are less hurtful to others than you would suppose, owing to the very nature of their condition. Were their energies free they would be an appalling danger, but their activities are clogged. Evil is sluggish, but Good is vital, as swift as light. Cold-dead people cause a certain amount of trouble it is true, to those to whom they belong. It is like a long winter, waiting for the spring. But Hurry-dead people are very mischievous. They are analogous to the moth that frets the garment on the Earth Plane. They destroy their own surroundings. Hurry is a great enemy of the soul."

"The condition most like to what on the Earth Plane you call Insanity, is Hurry here."

After a while he continued: "Damp-dead people are very bad indeed; they are those that have no spark of love or enthusiasm. Not even a quiet, steady liking for anything.

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"They have no place here; and as in Divine Ruling the best is given to all, it has been seen to be kindest to let them begin as Fungi—all over again."

"Even clear-running streams can get pitch into them." Almost immediately he added: "But streams run themselves clear in a night."

"*Death, Dead, Dying,*" he said, "terms that on Earth you shrink from because you do not know that they are *conditions of being.*"

"The first thing is to feel. The next step is to see further than your feelings. When people arrive at this stage of development they begin their sleep-life, they begin to live. But people rarely have a sleep-life unless they have had children, because children are awakeners," he said. "Everything on the Earth Plane—from the greatest natural formations in scenery to the gentlest breeze that bends a blade of grass, everything, I repeat, is the physical aspect of a spiritual counterpart, and just as children scream and cry in the night, awakening those around them in the body, so they arouse the spirit of those to whom they belong; first by the carnal pain of birth and then by the finer pain of love and suffering. They are well named 'Awakeners,'" he said.

The Dreamer heard him murmur as if to himself: "First the Egg, then the Nightingale—two stages of being—and then *Song.*"

After a moment the Interpreter rose as if to go.

"Where do you live?" the Dreamer asked.

"I have two rooms over the Cromwell Arms at the corner. Did you notice the old red building at the end of the street, by the elms? That was my home as a child," he said, "and though it has been burnt down, I am told, and rebuilt, and has suffered

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many changes I do not see them, and it is my home still."

The Dreamer awoke.

He was lying in the familiar surroundings of his bedroom. The room was filled with the cold clean air of a winter dawn, still but a streak upon the darkness. Far away, like a faint pin-scratch of sound, incredibly attenuated by distance he heard the first cock crowing. "It is morning," he said, "and I have been dreaming"; and he lay still thinking about his dream. It stayed by him with a strange persistence. Over and over there sounded in his mind the six words of assurance:

"Healed, fed, enlightened, comforted, loved, and forgiven."

SOME ASPECTS OF THE HIGHER SPIRITUALISM

THERE is a super-sensible world as well as a physical world, just as there is a spiritual body as well as a physical body. In all lands, in all ages, there have been some people aware of this. Long ago these people were those men we call the prophets, "the men of God" we read of in the Old Testament. Later, this truth was expressed by the saints and mystics. To-day it is the spiritual-minded among the orthodox and the so-named Spiritualists who are aware of this hidden or inner world; I am using the word "hidden" because it is in meaning the same as the word "occult," but it has not been so misused and hackneyed. It is with these, the Spiritualists, and their attitude towards Life and Death that I am dealing in this article to-day.

The Spiritualist! It is a word, if not of abuse, one of searing depreciation. One of the most inspired thoughts in the Book of Revelation is that which foretells that we shall each one day have a new name by which we shall be recognised. Spiritualism surely needs a new name. It labours under the weight of past error; it is overloaded with the dust of pettiness and vulgarity; it is handicapped by having to stand against the unfortunate if well-meant adherence of some of its warmest friends; but to anyone who looks deeper than the surface of things, to those who want to learn and judge for themselves, to these Spiritualism presents a very different aspect.

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They recognise it as something that has vitalised Religion; they find in it a line of thought that has brought comfort to thousands; they know it to be a movement that possesses such a core of reality that it cannot be lightly dismissed. The thing lives. Perhaps someone who has read so far may question this. "What has Spiritualism," they will exclaim, "to present the world with, but a few uneducated hymn-singers and perhaps a pack of soiled cards?" I would say to this: "Buy the current number of the paper called *Light*, it is for sale at every newsagent's, bring an unbiassed mind to the reading, and see if you do not here find something more than the literary equivalent of unctuous hymn-singing; see if you do not find more food for thought, more interest, more comfort in that unpretentious periodical than you have met with in other channels for some time." The paper *Light* is a good indication of what Spiritualism means, of what Spiritualists are thinking about. As a body of workers they are closer to the spirit of the New Testament than many Church folk would be ready to believe. The Church of England should look upon Spiritualism as a valuable ally. It makes a central attack upon Materialism, and not only identifies the material with the spiritual universe, but it has a store of useful knowledge and advice. I am not now alluding to the activities known as psychical phenomena, let us leave these to the scientists; I am thinking of the teaching that lies at the back of Spiritualism. This teaching is a revival of the old hortatory exposition of the law of Cause and Effect; and, it is a renewal of the divine promise, "Thou shalt not die but live." *Revival*. Renewal. Great words these. Yet unhesitatingly I ascribe each one as applicable to Spiritualism. Let us take them

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separately and see in what way, and to how great an extent they may be said to belong to it.

In the first place, owing to the Spiritualists having a working and practicable belief in the communication of souls, and constantly putting this belief into effect, they have been able to instruct themselves in those conditions in which mortals find themselves who have experienced the incident called Death. This knowledge is not the outcome of one mind, it is not the vague haverings of an emotional nature, one who tells of "a dream or vision of the night." On the contrary, it is an accumulation derived from many sources over a period of fifty or sixty years, and for anyone who desires to read and come to his own judgment in the matter, there is literature available.

These communications may be tinged by the hue of thought of the medium through whom they have been transmitted, or let us put it this way, these writings must suffer from the cramping and elimination imposed by the physical brain through which they have filtered—we have it on Bergson's authority the brain is pre-eminently an organ of inhibition—yet when this is said, there is throughout these communications an undeniable uniformity of design. A singular similarity of intention characterises these messages from the dead. They all say the same thing, they drive the same lesson home, they give the same warning. "Consequences," they say, "not punishment or reward. You died as you have lived. You make your own conditions; 'work while the light is yet with you, for the night cometh when no man can labour.'"

The following six books will interest anyone willing to arrive at an impartial and instructed

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opinion:—*Present Day Spirit Phenomena and the Churches*, by the Rev. Charles Tweedale. *New Light on Immortality*, by E. Fournier D'Albe. *Spiritualism in the Bible*, by M. H. Wallis. *Human Personality and its survival of bodily death*, by F. W. H. Myers. *The Realms of the Living Dead*, by Curtiss. *The Bible and the After Life*, by the Rev. Walter Wynn, and *Here and Hereafter*, by Leon Denys.

A great man once said in my hearing that he believed our terrestrial existence was of immense importance to our ultimate welfare, just as we are told in one of the parables. "It is our opportunity for making friends," he said, and he developed the idea in an interesting manner. "Here in this world of sense," he said, "on this material plane our senses give us knowledge of our surroundings. We know of countless objects and people, we see activities that have no direct bearing on ourselves. You have only to put your head out of your front door to understand my meaning. You see people you do not know going on their business. You see the butcher's boy turning the corner, someone running to catch a 'bus, the milkman doing his round, or people coming out of, or going into their houses, all nothing whatever to do with you; but you see them, you hear them, you are aware of them because of your senses. In another phase of existence, now, in what is termed 'the next world,' it may be quite different. What if it is a mental or spiritual expression of life? Then our points of contact with others would depend entirely on a basis of sympathy, some spiritual affinity or the like. Possibly we shall be aware only of those we have loved and served, or those to whom we are spiritually indebted. How terrible, if this is so, will be our plight

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if we have been selfish. If we have been cold and unfriendly, how desolate we shall be! If we have been entirely self-centred," he went on, "perhaps we shall be in utter solitude. What if this should be the state of outer darkness? No, let us hold on to this life here as our opportunity to serve others, to make to ourselves friends."

This is a good instance of the teaching at the back of Spiritualism. You see it here usefully developing and endorsing the Word in the New Testament; and this is why I say it has in its trend the spirit of Revival only a revival based not on emotion, but one built on instruction and commonsense.

I find in it a vitalising current that brings the living breath to old beliefs. No one, I imagine, will pretend that for the last fifty years mankind has seriously believed in the material significance of the existence of the Bottomless Pit? Nor in the pulpit warnings that quote the "worm that dieth not and the fire that will not be quenched." Yet our forefathers believed in these. In the days when the Church of England may be said to have been truly alive, when her aisles were thronged, and her message was widely and unhesitatingly hearkened to, this is what she preached: Consequences. It was couched, this truth, in figurative language, but the warning was there and the warning is the same that the teaching of Spiritualism is giving to-day. The Word that we are wont to associate with Holy Writ is in essence, identical with the message that is coming to us in these later scripts. Those of us who have the New Revelation at heart, know that Spiritualism gives a modern reading of the Bible; and this is why, if the Churches would but see it, it should be considered Religion's great ally. *Revival*, let me draw your

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attention to that word again. Spiritualism brings a revival of Belief. Accounts of events that had come to be considered as legendary, the narrative of incidents originally given as history, but since relegated to the region of fable, these in the light of the teaching of the present day regain their authority. And this is no small matter. The Greatest Ghost Story ever told, one that holds such vast import for the human race, receives at the hands of modern Spiritualism corroboration. In the days of Darwin and Huxley it was read lovingly and reverently no doubt, but sadly almost pityingly. They saw in it an account of what the torn heart would fain believe; they regarded it as a touching index of how much the bereaved mind will invent to lull its own sorrowing and dismay; but Spiritualists, in the light of their knowledge, read it with joy.

They recognise in it an account of a series of events, the like of which can happen, the like of which does happen to-day. For those who have proved for themselves that the communication of souls is a fact, these know that the ones we love—who are so wrongly called “the departed” can be—the doors being shut—in our midst again, and the Peace of great solace is theirs.

“I will not leave you comfortless,” He said, “I will come to you.” No question here, you will notice, of whether it was disturbing to Him to return. No doubt as to their correct attitude in greatly desiring Him to do so. He knew their loss and He was with them.

How often are Spiritualists faced with this question: “Doesn’t it disturb their rest? Ought you to wish to bring them back again?” But there is no hint of this possibility here; only the simple fulfil-

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ment of the assurance, "I will come to you." He had a circle of friends, you will remember, chosen by Him from time to time in what might appear to the uninitiated an arbitrary manner; but this was not so. He no doubt chose such among those he met who had psychic qualities, those we would call mediums to-day; and, being the Master of laws that govern Life and Death, laws beyond ordinary knowledge, He had so arranged it that He could enact a series of materialisations of His risen body that enabled those still in the flesh to see Him and touch Him once more on the physical plane. I think in this great story the teachers have unduly emphasised the Divinity and neglected the humanity of Christ. They risk taking Him from us altogether by setting Him so much apart. The Church preaches the resurrection of Christ as a unique and divine happening, but we know that we all rise from the condition of death. It is not in His resurrection that we witness Divinity. It is because in Life He showed us what we all may be, and in death declared to us what we are all doing, that He has for ever our worship and our love. He cannot "save" us by His death; and He can only save us by His Life, in so far as we have followed in His footsteps, endeavouring to approximate in our earthly lives as nearly as may be to His example.

Here again we see how well the Churches and Spiritualism might work together; and they need each other for the trend of the divines is to sublimate the great story of Christ's Death and Passion; Spiritualism, on the other hand, tends to forego something of the wonder of it all. Spiritualism needs uplifting and ennobling in its ways, for although it holds the Light it is a light carried in a horn lantern which

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would shine to wondrous advantage were it set behind the altar rails.

I was saying the trend of the Churches is to subliminate to "the last point of vision and beyond" the climax of Christ's sacrifice. Something of the same mistake is made in the conventional attitude towards our dead. It arises from the assumption that the experience of Death has in some way subtly and indefinitely changed their nature, and because of this it is thought they are removed from us. "The sacred dead," they say; but why sacred? Why more sacred when dead than before?

This is so strong a habit of thought that I know of one instance where at a trance sitting messages of an arresting and convincing nature came through; but the whole substance of the communication was to the recipient invalidated, because some garment was described: the communicator had impressed the control either to mention some clothes that he was wearing, or he desired them to be recalled. However that may have been, this was the point that was boggled over.

"How can they have clothes on the Other Side?" he cried, "how can they wear a garment if they haven't bodies?" And he forthwith abandoned the quest. Yet, the Figure Who walked beside the Disciples on the road to Emmaus was clothed and habited in every respect like to a bodily wayfarer, for they took Him to be such.

Significant indeed, and strangely pertinent to my theme, is the recording that He, too—even He—went unrecognised.

This matter of physical details connected with incarnate beings presents no doubt a great difficulty to the orthodox mind. I do not pretend that I can ex-

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plain the "rationale" of such things: happily there exists more than one Society for Psychical Research, and the savants of Europe are now giving their attention to matters that were thought beneath their notice only a little time ago, so perhaps in the near future we may get closer to an understanding of these perplexities. The orthodox, however, should hesitate to charge Spiritualists with supplying details of too material a nature in connection with the risen dead, while they have before them a Biblical record that Christ ate broiled fish with His Disciples after His earthly body had been crucified.

But the Churches apparently have an insuperable objection to admitting evidence, or even to studying evidence that is in favour of what they themselves exist to prove, that man is a spirit, and that the physical is interpenetrated by a super-sensible world.

I have recorded in a book called *The Earthen Vessel** much of this evidence, and there is more that I could add to it, but I am dealing to-day with the teaching at the back of Spiritualism not of my own experiences, and this teaching may be here summarised under seven headings:

1. The Fatherhood of God.
2. The Brotherhood of Man.
3. Continuous Existence.
4. The Communion of Souls and a Ministry of Angels.
5. Personal Responsibility.
6. Compensation and Retribution as the inevitable consequences hereafter for Good or Evil done on Earth; and, if we live rightly—
7. A path of Infinite Progression.

* Published by John Lane at the Bodley Head.

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In these seven principles it will be seen there is much that is identical with the teaching of the Churches, save in the fifth principle, which distinctly implies the inefficacy of substituted atonement. It rejects, and I think rightly rejects, the idea that man may escape the consequences of his past by faith in the goodness of another, and here it is in absolute accord with the words of Christ Himself (Matthew vii. 21).^{*} Spiritualism is not a Religion, but it throws a light upon the New Testament. Above all it establishes our faith upon Immortality of the Spirit rather than upon Resurrection of the Body.

Death is not the last enemy that shall be overcome, for death is a process of nature; but the materialistic blindness that hides those from us who have gone before, the separation that exists between this world, the physical, and the super-sensible which interpenetrates it (and which is so often alluded to as "the next world,") this exists because of our ignorance; and it is in so far as we instruct ourselves in the higher aspects of Spiritualism that we shall combat this ignorance, and destroy the power of Death.

^{*} Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.

SYMBOLISM

PART I

Now, and Within.

SYMBOLS are of great interest, for Symbolism is the language of the universal consciousness of the human race; and in this language are taught the truths which are the spiritual nourishment of the soul. Christ said, "Man doth not live by bread alone." We can link with that utterance the ejaculation of the Psalmist, "Grant me understanding, and I shall live"; for understanding is the spiritual bread which nourishes our spirit in its exile* here, just as surely as the harvest bread supports our bodies.

Everything upon the material plane has its spiritual counterpart; in fact that is an inverted way of expressing the truth; say rather that everything upon the material plane not only has its spiritual counterpart but exists and is manifested here only by reason of its spiritual counterpart. Just as the outer bark of the tree is one expression of the hidden sap within, which in its turn derives its being from the plane of spirit. What then does the Psalmist mean?

Understanding of what? The riddle of existence, our meaning here on earth? Yes; this understanding of which the Psalmist speaks is a recognition of the object of the pilgrimage of humanity; in short, the origin and destiny of Mankind.

* The word "exile" is misleading if it suggests a geographical significance, because the difference between "the quick and the dead" is one of consciousness rather than of locality. Thus dying is not "departing," rather is it a "becoming."

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There is a chapter in the *Pilgrim's Progress* in which the reader is introduced to a character called Mr. Interpreter. There are people who have this gift of making clear, but for the most part we find the Interpreters among the artists, for artists are revealers. It is they who turn our attention to the two truths they set before us in line and parable; and it is the recognition of these truths that helps us to bear with fortitude "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune."

These books, Nature and Human-Nature, mirror and reveal the spiritual world. Those who have been called "The Initiates" dwell in this spirit world, drawing from it their strength and wisdom; but they can only tell us of it in parable. They speak of it in symbols just as a careful mother places a guard around the fire to protect her children from harm, so we, in our present state of being, are safer with the burning truth veiled.

Some of us have brought with us to this particular phase of our existence some partly obliterated knowledge, fragmentary though it be, that yet helps us to cognise the spiritual world very clearly. The world that out-spheres, and inter-penetrates, upholds and influences this earthly world, giving it shape and substance, and, it may be, which shall co-ordinate and restore even the wreck and ruin of our blind misdoings.

A symbol is defined as an emblem, type, or creed. Creeds were used as secret signs to enable the early Christians to recognise each other in times of persecution. This was not their origin, for they are of infinitely greater antiquity than Christianity; but in this fact of their having been used as a code towards recognition there is an inner meaning that appeals

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to us. For we are all souls open to persecution by the accidents of life and these symbols are the precious creeds by which we recognise each other as united in a bond of fellowship. They shadow forth to us a hint of something immeasurably good that is our own, and to which we shall attain—or is it return?—one day.

These symbols have not the frail and transient beauty of sea shells that appear so lovely in the hand while fresh from the waves, to lie lustreless within a few hours because removed from their true home; for these word-treasures bear their home within them, gaining in beauty the longer we hold them in our recognition. They are not like sea-shells, the outer covering of what once had life, they are themselves the living casket that holds a vitalising thought. If we attain understanding (for to speak of being “granted” some good thing, is another way of saying we attain to it) then we may receive this living thought into ourselves adding thereby greatly to our soul-stature, and enhancing infinitely our well-being and our joy.

One of the symbols universal, in the sense of figuring in many religions, is that of the Temple, emblem of the individual human organism, with a secret place a Holy of Holies, a shrine for “the Indweller.” It is also a symbol of Time, which is but an expansion of the same idea.

Christianity is a graft upon a vastly older religion, and we see that even in Christ's days on earth the outer forms and ceremonies of sacerdotalism had already concealed from the common understanding the meaning of this symbol. For those who heard the Master speak of it thought He alluded to the Tabernacle, and that He was preaching sacrilegious

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violence. And this in a country of the East, where metaphor is far more the habit of thought than it is among the peoples of the West—"Grant us understanding, that we may live."

This ejaculation of the Psalmist is no weak and desponding cry to a cold and distant God. It is an invigorating appeal to "the Indweller," a sharp outcry to the hidden shrine of self: "To live I must understand the meaning of life—the only death is not to understand."

It is a cry of birth.

Socrates presents the same idea in another way. "Get wisdom," he exclaims, "or a rope to hang thyself."

Christ in teaching dwelt upon this symbol of the Temple, and in another passage it is made abundantly clear. "Your bodies are the Temple of the Living God."

Masonic emblems are symbols of spiritual truths and are of great antiquity. They all refer to the pilgrimage of the soul which must be effected, at least at this stage of the journey, in the sandals of human nature; a weary road.

In the ritual of Freemasonry occur these words:

"Whence come you?"

"From the East."

"Whither are you directing your steps?"

"To the West."

"What is your inducement?"

"To find that which is lost."

"Where do you hope to find it?"

"In the centre."

Now, in esoteric literature the East corresponds to birth and the West to death; and I have no doubt that this is the origin of the phrase "Gone West" so

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commonly used by the soldiers to-day. They have themselves no explanation of the term beyond its meaning to die, and though there have been letters in various newspaper correspondence on the subject, they more often ask than supply a derivation for the use of the phrase. The idea receives support when we read that Osiris, the god held to hold sway over the souls of the departed, was called by a name that signified "The Lord of the West."

The Crusaders brought from the East many esoteric traditions. The names of some of the orders of chivalry they founded bear witness to this, the Order of the Golden Fleece, and the story of St. George of Cappadocia we now consider peculiarly our own. Just so may a word or a phrase remain, its origin trivial it may be and remote, yet perpetuated, like a fly in amber.

There is the allusion in the *Pilgrim's Progress* to the room that faced towards the East. Bunyan held Christian to figure the type of every one of us, for every mortal is a pilgrim though he may himself be unwitting of the fact. Bunyan wrote of the East in the sense in which all allegory is written, dealing with the inner plane of Being; the sense in which Whittier wrote,

. . . All the windows of my heart
I open to the Day.

Among symbols, a scallop shell is the emblem of the pilgrim, and this is so because in days when china and glass were unknown, pewter too costly, and earthenware too heavy and brittle for way-faring, a scallop made the pilgrim's cup. There is meaning again here, if we care to seek it, for we had best go to Nature wherewith to slake the spirit's thirst upon

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our pilgrimage, if we can reach her. Man's handiwork is one step further dissociated.

While we are speaking of the East in symbology the mysterious little verse by Mary Coleridge comes to mind.

We were young, we were merry, we were very, very wise,
And the door stood open at our feast,
When there passed us a Woman with the West in her eyes
And a Man with his back to the East.

A poetic way of saying death for each of us? Yes, for everyone—for this is the mortal lot; but there is more in it than this. There is an ethical distinction; for though we must all die, it is assuredly ill to turn our back to the sunrise. Horos, his other name, signifies the Redeemer.

The points of the compass each have their significance in the teaching of Theosophy. The North represents existence out of the flesh; take it as spirit untrammelled. It is called the Mountain, the highest point on the Wheel. Man received revelation, according to the Scriptures, when he ascended "the mountain." Moses derived inspiration hence, which he interpreted into laws for the welfare of the people. The South corresponds to the lowest point of the Circle, spirit most deeply, most sorely, plunged in matter.

And while we are thinking of these terms in the light of spiritual understanding, suddenly with new meaning, one hears the thunders of Isaiah:

Fear not: for I am with thee,
I have called thee by name.
I will bring thee from the East
I will gather thee from the West.

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I will say to the North: "Give up."
And to the South: "Keep not back."
I have redeemed thee.

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There is one symbol of extreme antiquity. It denotes the idea of the Trinity. It was the Druidic symbol of "The One without Darkness," "The Incommunicable Name." It is figured as three descending rods of light, and as one thousand years before Christ is given as approximately the date of the founding of the Druidic Order in Britain, you may deduce to what remote ages this sign belongs. And it is because of it figuring the Trinity, or the triune nature of man, that the Egg figures at Easter time. It shows forth body, soul, and spirit, and it is to this three-fold strand that the phrase in the Scriptures applies: "Be thou whole." It means the perfect health that results from complete balance to which, if we attain, no disease or calamity may harm us.

The Trinity is within ourselves. It stands for the lofty conception of the Celestial Man, of which Browning prophesies in Paracelsus, and of which we have glimpses in the prayer:

Thy Kingdom come *in me*.

Thy will be done in earth, *in the earth of me, in my earthly body*, even as it is fulfilled in Heaven.

Earth the body, Heaven the Soul, and His will, informing Spirit.

In the symbol of the Egg, the vital spark in the yolk is Divine; by it the egg is rendered potential. It is encased in the clear white substance of the soul, which in turn is surrounded by the shell, represent-

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ing the protective but highly vulnerable material body.

And our resurrection, the true Easter, is within ourselves. "In that day, thou shalt say, 'I will praise Thee.' Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One *in the midst of thee.*"

We have the three rods in this ancient sign, but there is something outside these rods, and this is the light that illumines them. We have the three constituents of the egg, but there is something beyond these which animates them; and I think it was of this truth that the Master spoke when He compared the Kingdom of God to a little leaven which the woman of the parable (figuring spiritual intuition) took and hid in three measures of meal (body, soul and mind) until the mass had *risen*. The whole being permeated and raised through the working of the Spirit. In another place of the Bible we read of the Three Children in the fiery furnace, "and the form of the Fourth is like unto the Son of God."

The Easter Egg stands for the triumph of spirit over matter, or rather the sublimating of matter by spirit, for the word triumph suggests ingratitude and scorn of the body, and wrongly so, for the body is instrumental to spirit in its development. And this brings us to face the great and uplifting truth, dazzling to mortal eyes that had best view it kneeling, that the human is of use to the Divine.

Browning has this thought in Rabbi ben Ezra—

Let us not always say—

"Spite of this flesh to-day

I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole."

As the bird wings and sings,

Let us cry, "All good things

Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more now than flesh helps soul."

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There are symbols, both recondite and cryptic, to be discovered if we are interested. Types that again symbolise the constitution of Man.

In some religions we are not taught so much of the triune nature and the One outside inter-penetrating, but the same truth is dealt with as fourfold, and spoken of rather as the Celestial and the Terrestrial Dualities—Spirit and Soul on the one hand, and Mind and Body on the other. And four types of this truth come down to us from the ancient Egyptian Mysteries, and have become petrified in a most unexpected stratum, which has preserved them to this day. I say “petrified” with intention, for what was once bread has indeed become stone. These four appear every year unrecognised, in the Christmas Pantomime, but they preserve happily every detail and accessory of their sacred origin—Harlequin, *Spirit*; Columbine, *the Soul*; Clown, *the Mind*; and Pantaloon, *the Body*.

Harlequin appears masked, signifying concealed identity, or Invisibility, the Unknown. He wears a glittering dress, typical of the Heavenly Bow, the Seven Divine Spirits, and their distinctive tinctures. He has a wand in his hand—the rod of sacred Mythros symbol of the power of will, control over matter. You see this figure by his striking a door on the stage and vanishing through it, the door springing back again and appearing as though it had never been dislodged. This figures the passing of spirit through matter, the illusion of apparent solidity.

Columbine, or Colombe, the Human Soul, is his inseparable companion. She is beautiful, ærial, and obedient to him. He is the Shining One, the All-pervading, she is his faithful counterpart, divine only in being his. What we know as the Song of Solomon

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is the Voice of the Divine to the Individual Human soul "*Arise*, my love, my fair one, and come with me." "*Arise*"—you will find the same word with the same significance in "I will *arise* and go to my Father."

In the one case the appeal is from the Spirit to the human soul: in the other it is the aspiration in the human soul towards the Divine; the two poles of a magnetic field.

The Clown's characteristics are wholly materialistic. He is adroit, cunning, worldly-wise, deceitful, and humorous. All his activities are adapted to low or mundane objects, and he collides with Law and Order, which are the outer representatives of the Divine. He is dressed in red and white. Red is the colour in mysticism usually signifying matter. It is the colour of the Lion in heraldry—and the Lion of Judah, as seen by St. John "*prevailing*," represents the sublimating of Matter by Spirit. The Clown controls and directs his companion Pantaloon, the Body, who is represented as a weak creature with no initiative, or will of his own.

The ordeals through which Harlequin and Columbine pass are the tribulations of the soul and spirit while in the material phase of existence, and their final union is figured by what we know as the Transformation Scene. It sets forth the supreme object of all discipline and doctrine, the marriage of Spirit and the Bride.

Now the ancient Egyptian Mystery plays of which this is a relic were of astronomical origin; and it is a testimony to the indelible nature of tradition that this fossilised fragment of what once had life should now be only given at Christmas-time when the solar course begins.

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Another point of significance: it is given in gesture only, showing that its action is truly on the Inner stage of Man's being, of which words fall short, and parable and imagery are resorted to. "I will incline mine ear unto the Parable, and show my dark speech upon the harp."

It might conceivably give us pause to find a sacred meaning in so secular a setting, till we remember that in ancient times the stage was used for edification rather than for amusement. Before the printing of books it was the chief instrument for education, and its earliest activities were Morality Plays.

If once you receive this idea of the esoteric or hidden meaning of the constitution of Man into your mind, it becomes to you clear as the sun in the sky, and moreover you see it mirrored in any surface that is capable of receiving the image. You have it again in the four faces of the Living Creature, so continually alluded to as "the faces of the Four Living Creatures": it should be *the four faces or facets of the Living Creature*, i.e., the four aspects or facets of the one entity—the Eagle representing Spirit, the Human Face figuring the Soul, the Lion the mind, or earthly instrument and the Ox the body. The legend that the eagle can gaze upon the sun is no ornithological fact—it is a fable of sacred meaning. It means "Spirit with spirit can meet."

You see these four faces of the Living Creature carved round the pulpit in our churches, and possibly you are told they are the emblems of the four Evangelists. Their date is probably thousands of years earlier than those four teachers or recorders of the Word. Symbolism is not only the key to the Christian Scriptures, it lights up the illimitably far removed past. It is the silent language of the human

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race in its long pilgrimage. This key, capable of unlocking treasures, is one however that in our religious teaching has been too often lost, or allowed to rust upon our shelves of learning*. We glance at it occasionally if an antiquarian mood takes our fancy, but too often it is only to murmur with Mr. Pecksniff, "Pagan, I regret to say."

There is little doubt the Fathers of the Early Christian Church knew the esoteric meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures; a number of Egyptian symbols and pagan dogmas were adopted by them in the early days of the Christian Church. This has ever been the way of all teachers of the Human Race; St. John did not invent baptism. St. John baptised the crowd because water traditionally represented Spirit, and was understood to symbolise re-birth, or cleansing of the material senses. He formalised anew a divine idea, taking to his use an ancient custom, and making it, by the drive of his own being, once more a potent and living force. And this is true of other symbols in religion. The idea of the Trinity, the emblem of the lily, these and many others were incorporated in Christian teaching and are to-day preserved in the iconography of the Greek and Roman Churches: water, fire, the dove, the lamb, these are all figures of early Egyptian esotericism.

We meet the fourfold strand, the four faces of the Living Creature, again in as unexpected a setting as the Christmas Pantomime. It is in the four suits of playing cards. The two red and the two black suits here represent the Celestial and the Terrestrial

* Much in ancient religions appertained to the recognition and development of the psychic powers in human nature, and this knowledge was confined rigorously to the Priest class and their schools, as it should be in the keeping of the Church to-day. I refer my readers to the life of Pythagoras, in *The Great Initiates*, by Edouard Schuré.

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Duality. Of these the Diamond, the stone of the Apocalypse, is Spirit, the essentially pure and Shining One. The Heart is the soul, the seat of divine aspiration, love and intuition (the feminine element in the constitution of man). The Spade-head is the mundane mind, dealing with the earth, and earthly matters. It analyses, delves, attacks, and penetrates. The Club figures here the body, a fitting symbol like the Ox, conveying an idea of physical attributes only.

Of these the chief is the Ace or Unit. It has superior sway, it "takes" everything, controlling King, Queen and Knave. It is absolute. Again, the astronomical origin of this set of symbols is shown by the number twelve given in the suits. The signs of the Zodiac, the twelve constellations through which the Ancients held the course of the Sun to lie.

We find the fourfold strand again in the story of Noah and his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japhet. Of these the most blessed, the worthiest is Shem, the soul, the progenitor of the Chosen People. The Chosen People are the Initiates. Japhet, the mind, is father of the European races, which are pre-eminently intellectual in civilisation, and have developed shrewd invention rather than spiritual insight. Ham figures the body; the lowest races of humanity have been called the descendants of Ham, and in this particular allegory of the same truth it is easy to read the submission of the physical attributes in the words, "Cursed be Ham, a servant of servants shall he be."

This is the same anathema as was pronounced over Adam. Adam stands for Matter; the name Adam signifies "Red Earth." "The old Adam" is spoken of as being redeemed or sublimated, in the conception of the Celestial Man, or the Christlike spirit. Recall in this connexion, the picture by William Blake of

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The Dream of Eve. She lies sleeping in the Eden from which she is to be expelled, and she dreams of the Future. A Crucifixion is figured before her closed but illumined eyes, two figures stand on either side of the Cross. One is Adam and the other is St. Michael, and the loathsome forms of Sin and Death lie coiled around the base of the Cross, one nail penetrating and rendering impotent these two powers. St. Michael stands there to typify the martial character of spiritual conflict; and Adam's countenance is raised.

You have the psychic constitution of Man again alluded to in the strange and beautiful account of Jacob's encounter with the Angel. The name Jacob signifies in Hebrew the one, single. The struggle is described, typifying Man's desire and effort to find his place in the Universe, and his great longing, his inextinguishable and flaming need that it should be for some good purpose—" *I will not let thee go until thou bless me.*" And then comes, to the uninitiated the seemingly capricious, the wholly arbitrary change of appellation: "No longer shalt thou be called Jacob (one) but IS-RA-EL": the mystical three. In Hebrew the nomenclature contains a volume of meaning, as does the numeration. Each is a separate study in itself. We get glimpses of this far field of knowledge in Scriptural stories such as this, and these serve but to make us realise and deplore how little the Western mind is trained to deal, even superficially, with the literature that is provided for its chief support.

"No longer shalt thou be called Jacob (one) but IS-RA-EL." No longer art thou the circumscribed and finite one, but the self-sufficing, free and infinite One, who is Three-fold. *Is*, the intuitive feminine

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element; *Ra*, the intellectual masculine element, and *El*, Elohim, the oldest name for God, denoting majesty or authority; or, on the word of an excellent Hebraist, "He, who persisteth." This gives the Three in One.

Now Religion is by its very nature spiritual and addressed to the soul. It bears no congruous relation to the historical, save as the historical is its vehicle of manifestation. Two words stand as the watchwords to the Kingdom of God, as this is understood by us in religion. These words are *Now* and *Within*; for we are taught rightly there is no past tense in Divine Action. Sacred events denote processes, and sacred persons figure principles, eternally present and operative in the Soul. If we remember this, the symbols which have been deadened and petrified till they are as stones, become once more Living Bread; and much in our religion will no longer be the cerements of the dead, but robes, veiling but not hiding, the ever-living brightness of the Word of God. So let us have understanding that we may live.

PART II

Light to the mind, what shall the will enjoy?

Echo. Joy.

—GEORGE HERBERT.

FIRE and light have been taken as symbols in the religions of all time, and they are an expression of an exalted apprehension in mankind.

The ancient Druids taught there are but two inhabitations of the Supreme Being: the Human Soul, the invisible, and the Universe, the visible Temple. In these later days we find our Druidic teaching

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notably, in Wordsworth's poetry—read the first twenty lines of the IXth Book of *The Excursion*—and in the noble teaching of the Universal Church. The Druids considered the Supreme to be incommunicable, too august to name; therefore they used the Sign,* of which I have already told. They took the Sign, in one of its meanings, to represent God's relation to the Past, the Present and the Future, belonging to all Eternity; and this thought presents us with another aspect of the Three, with an outer, a greater Fourth. They thought of the Supreme Being as Creator of the Past, Conserver of the Present, and Renewer of the Future. In this last there is a suggestion of the idea of Destroyer, but only as I understand it, in the sense Browning has it, in the line—"When God un-makes, but to re-make a soul."

They taught, further, that the Universe is in substance eternal and imperishable, but subject to successive cycles of dissolution and renovation. Every soul, however frequent its lapses, will ultimately—so taught the Druids—attain the proper end of existence, which is re-union with God. Animals approach higher cycles, in proportion with their gentleness or utility. The eternity of the soul is a succession of states of new experiences, in each stage attaining to fuller capacity for happiness, until its consummation with the Divine. In every life there exists God.

Their teaching was given in the form of triads—again an allusion to the Trinity in Human Nature: Wisdom of the Laws of God, Concern for the welfare of Man, and Fortitude against the accidents of Life—*Fortitude*—not resignation; a pulsing virtue, resignation.

* The three lines of descending light.

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And finally, let me give you this perfect blossom from the ancient Tree of teaching:

"There be three men that all should look on with affection—he that with rapture looks upon the face of the earth, he that with delight beholds beautiful handiwork, and he who lovingly looks on a little child. The souls of all such pass into higher cycles of existence."

These few quotations suffice to make quite clear how lofty a school of thought was the Druid teaching. It is untrue to say there is very little known about the builders of Stonehenge. It is an excellent instance of the class of conventional opinion that abounds. It rears itself from the mass of opinion at second-hand that the majority appear to hold so contentedly. The remark that follows commonly, is that human sacrifices doubtless took place upon these altars.

Now the Ancient Religions should be studied as the soil from which our own moral teaching has sprung, and it is with humility we should admit that to-day is the era of human sacrifice, and the power that is abroad now, is one that seeks to brutalise the human race, and to reverse civilisation.

Christ said, "I come not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil"; and in a time when doctrine had gone far to suffocate the living thought it stood for, He strove to quicken and to renew. And to-day there is a spirit abroad whose work is not to destroy but to fulfil, which seeks to re-lume ancient symbols and to shed light upon the path.

That the Scriptures need interpreting is as true to-day as it was when those who walked with the Risen Christ on the road to Emmaus felt their hearts burn within them; for "He opened the Scriptures to them," we read. And it is to the simple, and the

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Divinely-accompanied that the Scriptures are opened to-day. Not necessarily to the intellectual. Receptivity and a loving heart open the ears of the soul to those in the Spirit world, who walk with us "by the way." They speak to us, if we will listen. From blindness of heart may we be delivered.

The primal duties shine aloft—like stars,
The charities that heal, and soothe, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of Man, like flowers.

Christ continually revealed truth in things most familiar to common life. Water, light, grain, tares, leaven, a coin, harvest fields, an erring son, thorns, flocks, a banquet, a vineyard, a little child. These subjects He lifted from the common way, the way common to all feet, held them up to sight, making their outer form show forth an inner meaning. Yet He knew only some would understand. He said, "He that hath ears, let *him* hear."

And these emblems and countless others, are about us now—they lie at our feet, they shine from the skies, they move in the wind, they are all around and about us, beautiful and common as daisies. There is the outward show, and behind it the in-forming reality.

The Triangle, with the point upward, in the formation of the Pyramids of ancient Egypt, gives again the idea of the Triune nature of man, but when Man begins to build symbols he often loses the thought in the dust of his activity; and the heavy edifice crushes the idea, and the living breath suffocates in the woven fabrics of the shrine.

There were Initiates in the religions of the old world who taught the people just so much as they

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knew they were ready to receive. Religion was rightly understood to be closely bound up with the material welfare of their flock. The rites and ceremonials synchronised with the sowing time and that of harvest, the Corn Gods of Egypt and the great Circles that were Calendars as well as being Holy Shrines, prove this to be so.

The divine nature of Fire figures in many myths and legends of the primitive world. Here is an Invocation at Sunrise, that was in use in Egypt, thousands of years ago:—

“Unveil, O Thou who art Lord of the Universe, from whom all come, to whom all must return, Thy face now hidden by a vase of golden light: That we may know the Truth and do our whole duty in this our sojourn towards Thy sacred seat.”

An article on Symbolism would be vain without at least allusion to the San Graal. There is a complete literature on the subject, one can touch only on the fringe of the matter in a slight paper such as this. In this symbol you have again a Light in a Golden Vase, the Divine contained in the Material, the Indweller, and the Shrine; all telling Man's nature and his spiritual destiny.

It is Horn Tooke who said that “letters are like soldiers they drop out on a long march,” and it certainly is commoner to find letters lost altogether than as in this instance, transposed. The G in Graal should be at the end of the first word, which is *Sang*, and not, as generally understood, *Sant*, or *Holy*—the San Graal is the *Sang-Real*, the Water of Life, the Living Stream of which the human blood of Christ was emblematic.

The legend of the Garden of Hesperus, the Garden of Armida, and the mediæval story of the Romaunt

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of the Rose each embody the same idea. It is of a garden in whose centre grows some life-giving fruit or flower which is the reward of one who discovers the secret by which *the centre* of the garden is reached—or it may be of him who can overcome the Dragon who guards it. This garden is the garden of the Soul, and the Tree of Life, or Mystical Rose, is that innermost perception of spirit which the Master spoke of when He said it would be a well of water springing up to Everlasting Life to all who should taste of it. These shall not thirst again.

If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the Flower of Peace,
The Rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress, and thine Ease.

This fortress is what we know as “the defence that lies in boundless love of His perfection.” And the Mystical Rose: how shall we speak of this? with the five petals, representing the wounds of Christ, the five wounds of Initiation. These figure to the mystic the regeneration of the five senses which are to become affinitised to a higher and internal plane. George Herbert tells this well in his poem called “Heaven,” for human nature echoes or reflects the divine, and it is within ourselves we shall find all we seek, for the Garden of Armida is within.

O who will show me those delights on High?

Echo. I.

The Lotus and Water are among the oldest symbols, purely Aryan in origin; but as religions are all one in the sense of the spiritual teaching in the ideas at the back of every school of divine thought being the same, we find symbols Aryan in origin figuring in Judaism

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and in Christianity. The divinely born Buddha is shown as seated in a water lily, and Gabriel bears a lily in his hand when giving Mary the promise of a divinely born child.

In Mysticism the letter M symbolises water. In old designs it stands as a glyph for the waves. In the Grecian myths you have the goddess Aphrodite divinely born from the waves, and the letter is in the name Mary, which signifies the bitter waters of Mara. Many of the sacred names in Indian religion begin with this letter M. Maya is the mother of Buddha, and in Judaic scriptures you find the coupling of the idea of water with this letter, in the name of Moses. "And Pharaoh's daughter called his name Moses, because, said she, I drew him out of the water."

The fish, not only in the combination of the letters of its name, but also because of the element it is drawn from, figures as an emblem in Christian lore.

It was of water in this mystic sense that Christ spoke when in reply to Nicodemus He said, "Verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

There are many "Masters in Israel" to-day who know not these things.

We are born of water and of the Spirit when we become affinitised to the inner plane of Being, and are alive to the spiritual values of our earthly life. The Kingdom of Heaven is within.

Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
And not within thyself, thy soul will be forlorn.

And Tolstoy tells us, "You may go across the sea to find Christ, and lose Him in your own soul."

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The Way of Life is the Way of the Cross. To be born into a mortal body is to be nailed upon a Cross, and the words of attainment, the words of Christ—" *Consummatum est* "—signify the possibility of initiation in Humanity.

The Rose symbolises, by the regeneration of the five senses, Divine Reunion. Dante takes the Rose as the emblem of the final culmination of Life, complete self-realisation, in his *Paradiso*. You read of the Red Rose, the White Rose, the Golden Rose.

Isis, Diana, the blessed Virgin Mary—each in turn symbolises *the birth of Truth in a pure soul*. This is the meaning of the story of the Virgin Birth. Grant us understanding that we may live.

William Blake has given us a picture of the Nativity. In tone it is a sombre picture. The interior of the stable is shown, there are the quiet kine, there is Joseph. Leaning back and supported by him, shown divinely pure and pale, is the figure of the Virgin, and in the air, springing forth upon the void, seen in an arc of light, is the radiant form of the Divine Child. Opposite and leaning forward with eager eyes is St. Elizabeth, representing here, Humanity. She receives the Spirit with open, outstretched hands, she yearns towards the Light. And at the back of this scene is shown a square opening upon a dark night. One ray of light streams across it—this is the light of the Truth of incarnation, the light that lighteth every man who cometh into the world.

William Blake's poetry, no less than his strange and beautiful drawings, is full of Symbolism. He was a great seer. He felt the Immanence of the spiritual world, and recognised it, writing of it lucidly, and entirely simply in his poem called "Night."

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The sun descending in the West,
The stars begin to shine,
The birds are seeking for their nest,
And I must seek for mine.
The Moon like a flower,
In Heaven's high bower,
In silent delight,
Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, ye fields! and happy grove!
Where flocks have ta'en delight,
Where lambs have nibbled, silent move
The feet of angels bright.
Unseen, they pour blessing,
And joy without ceasing,
On each bud and blossom,
And each sleeping bosom.

They visit caves of every beast,
To keep them all from harm;
They look in every thoughtless nest,
Where birds are covered warm.
If they see any weeping,
That should have been sleeping,
They sit down by the bed,
And pour sleep on the head.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey,
They pitying stand and weep,
Seeking to drive their thirst away
And keep them from the sheep.
But if they rush dreadfully,
The angels, most heedfully,
Receive each mild spirit,
New worlds to inherit.

And here the lion's ruddy eyes
Shall flow with tears of gold,
And pitying their tender cries,
And walking round the fold,
Shall say, "Wrath by His meekness
And by His health,—sickness,
Are driven away
From our Immortal Day.

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And now beside thee, bleating lamb,
I can lie down and sleep,
And think on Him who bore thy name,
Graze after thee and weep.
For washed in Life's river,
My bright mane for ever
Shall shine like the gold,
As I watch o'er the fold."

I do not want to brush the jewelled dust from the wings of this poem. I will try at least not to havoc it, in returning to the lines that make peculiar appeal.

They pitying stand and weep

No censure, no punishment. Only compassion, constructive sorrow—

Seeking to drive their thirst away

That is what we know as impression by the Spirit-world—

But if they rush dreadfully,
The angels, most heedfully,
Receive each mild spirit,
New worlds to inherit

A great truth here, most simply uttered. Death is a development. It is an inheriting of a new aspect of life—not necessarily a new world—the worlds exist for us as we perceive them—and this development is true not only of mankind, but of all creation. Life is an expression of Spirit, it cannot die. Here is a classification of Life as it is manifested on the Earthly Plane.

Unconscious	.	.	the mineral world
Conscious	.	.	the plant world
Self-conscious	.	.	the animal world
God-conscious	.	.	Mankind

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We imagine the minerals to be unconscious, with what justice I know not, but obviously the plant and tree world are conscious: They respond to outer conditions, rain and sunlight; they benefit from these, and show evidence of feeling the withdrawal of these benefits, withering without the one, blanching without the other.

The animal creation is more fully conscious—they seek for food and shelter, desire to perpetuate their species, and show solicitude for their young.

And Man is God-conscious. He can figure something greater than himself. He chooses between good and evil. He says, "Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I."

And now, after giving this classification, let us return to the thought of all this great evidence of life, differentiated into so many diverse forms, and degrees of being, all progressing toward re-union, higher self-realisation, through strenuous often painful self-perfecting which ensures ever-increasing capacity for joy.

Through all the mighty commonwealth of things
Up from the creeping plant to sovereign Man.

And then the culmination of Life—

. . . . the Lion's ruddy eyes
Shall flow with tears of gold.

You remember the signification of the Lion? There are quantities of allusions throughout the Scriptures to the Lion figuring symbolically as matter: Honey found in the carcase of a Lion—" *Out of the strong shall come forth the sweet.*" Honey, like gold is the emblem of the spiritually refined, a quintessence, something rarefied. We are told, with inner

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meaning, that Christ on the first occasion of eating with the disciples after the Resurrection "took honey and fish"—honey the symbol of spirit, the fish emblem of Immortality. Notice how often, in mystical teaching, the antithesis is given by conjunction of the coarse and heavy with the refined and clarified.

In Jeremiah we read: "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond; it is graven upon the table of the heart."

Iron, the metal to be smelted and smithied into shape and usefulness, and the Diamond the perfected, the shining stone of the Apocalypse, together, these write upon the table of the heart. And the final sublimation of Matter by Spirit is promised in the words, "Weep not, behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals" Here again, in this poem by Blake is the sublimation of Matter promised through the working of the Spirit. Rapine, the ferocity of Force, shall be one day turned to excellent uses. The Lion will one day "keep" the fold. Savage energies shall be guided to divine purposes; "that day shall gentle their condition." But what Day? The Millennium? Yes; but let us do away with any misconception here; this is no impossibly removed far-off perfection, of which we speak. This Immortal Day is within us. It is ours. And moreover, it is ours now. It is the kingdom of the Indweller, which is in the human heart. That Immortal Day of which the poet sings is immanent. Even in the midst of this strife and carnage in which we stand to-day we may step over our own lintel to reach it; "for God's help is nearer than the threshold." Yes, because it lies within us. "*Knock, and it shall be opened.*" "*Seek, and ye shall find.*"

SHEPHERD'S CROWNS

PART III

*Death, be not proud that some have callèd thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so.*

—DONNE.

IN Hebrew every letter and every number is truly a figure. We say, in ordinary parlance, "a figure of speech"; now in Hebrew a number is not only a figure of quantity, but it is also a figure of thought. If it be shaped like a 5, it not only means 5 different objects, a numerical cypher, but it holds further recondite meanings that are there for such as care or know how, to read them. This holds good not only of the system of sacred numeration, as mentioned in the Scriptures, but it is also true of sacred nomenclature. Elucidation of these two branches of learning, which shade into one another so that they may be regarded as one study, would require a volume to itself. It can be only touched on here, in so far as explaining the significance of the letter I. The letter I stands for the individual, the human organism of Man. It is also connected with Jah, the I AM of Moses, the name Jehovah. Now carry your thoughts back to the emblem of the Indweller and the Temple, the I AM and the Incommunicable Name, and link that again in your minds with the mystery of the Ego, the riddle of the Human Race . . . the eternal questions of the individual: "Whence am I?" "Whither go I?" "What is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the Son of Man that Thou visitest him?" These strands of thought, held together vaguely and loosely it may be in the mind, become ordered and woven into a cord of useful strength when one reads that in Hebrew the small i with the dot above it, represents the human entity, the frag-

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ment of differentiated Spirit, the being called Man; and the dot symbolises the over-shadowing of it by the Divine: neither is complete without the other, the one beneath the other higher than it. Then heighten the i, draw it upward, increase the stature, and with the descent of the dot, the two blend, and make the capital I. The I of the individual, the dust and the Divine Breath; Man.

It is the divine in man that is his Interpreter; and in the following poem, by Walter de la Mare, the I who speaks at the end of each verse unravels some mystery and in the very trend of the question, reveals.

I am going to be clumsy enough to enter here with words beyond this poem's own saying, because I am dealing with Symbolism, and this poem is jewelled with symbols, and by reason of this is delivered into my hand: but I would say, let those whose own souls have heard the voice of their Indweller set this paper down here and now and read no further; for I shall but tell them what they already know.

Who said, " Peacock Pie " ?
The old King to the sparrow.
Who said, " Crops are ripe " ?
Rust to the harrow.
Who said, " Where sleeps she now,
Where rests she now her head,
Bathed in Eve's loveliness " ?
That's what I said.

Who said, " Aye, mum's the word " ?
Sexton to willow.
Who said, " Green dusk for dreams,
Moss for a pillow."
Who said, " All Time's Delight
Hath she for narrow bed,"
"Life's troubled bubble broken,"
That's what I said.

SHEPHERD'S CROWNS

The Peacock is the Emblem of Immortality.

The old King is Wisdom, and the sparrow is—an Inch-wit. We all know Inch-wits—we are Inch-wits ourselves repeatedly. Well, the Inch-wit says here: "When you bury a body, you bury the person." And the old King—Wisdom—replies: "You might as well put a peacock in a pie, as a soul into a coffin."

The Rust then speaks to the Harrow: "Your work is over—let me speak to you lying here inactive, ever since you harrowed the fields: *Crops are ripe*, I tell you; get rusty, the work is done." And that is all the rust on the harrow can tell of the matter. The harrow was in use before even the crops were in blade; how can it tell of the golden grain stored in sovereign barns or know of the loaf upon the children's table? It knows nothing beyond what its own rust tells it. We often listen to our own rust. Now the Indweller begins to speak:

Who said, "Where sleeps she now?
Where lays she now her head,
Bathed in Eve's loveliness"?
That's what I said.

She is irradiated in the evening light of her perfect and accomplished Day; her day on earth—replies the Indweller, the Interpreter. And just as those lovely words close, there breaks in again the questions, asked by those "dwellers among the tombs"—

Who said, "Aye, mum's the word"?
Sexton to willow.

That is the silence of Death; "Aye, mum's the word," says the sexton, whose spade is continually striking upon the skull of some poor jester; and he speaks to the weeping willow you notice, a tree gener-

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ally connected with churchyards, or some funereal urn, fitting type of those mourners whose thoughts all follow their beloved to the tomb, and who remain there looking downward. Such as these are continually seeking the Living with the Dead. There are too many of these. The Indweller will not leave them, however, to their wormy talk. I hear him break in with the lovely, age-old reminder that Death is but a sleep, and a short sleep before waking,

Who said, "All Time's Delight"

—(a brave word that, for Eternity!)—

. . . . "All Time's Delight
Hath she for narrow bed."

—(her grave, if you could truly see it, is her realisation of Eternity)—

"Life's troubled bubble broken"
That's what I said.

"Life's troubled bubble broken." How often in days of anguish and desolation do not our hands reach out to the Immortals for succour? And they never fail us, we who are yet in this world of thrall. They give us some word, some token of their true liberty.

If a star were confined within a tomb,
Her captive flame must needs burn there,
But when the Hand that locked her up gives room,
She'll shine through all the sphere.

"Life's troubled bubble broken." Then freedom, an ampler life. The poets are our Interpreters, and

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with how manifold a voice do they proclaim the same truth

How fares it with the happy dead?

one asks, and the reply is given in a measured serenity that falls like sleep upon weary eyelids:

The great Intelligences fair,
That range above our mortal state,
In circle round the blessed gate,
Received, and gave him welcome there.

And led him thro' the blissful climes,
And showed him in the fountain fresh,
All knowledge that the sons of flesh
Shall gather, in the cycled times.

And lightly does the whisper fall—
" 'Tis hard for thee to fathom this:
I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all."

There is more than "a holy hope" here, there is "a high humility" in Man's dependence and trust in the existence of a spiritual world around him. In those obstinate questionings that will not be stilled, he shows his godhead; his love of the beautiful is a homing instinct, and his feet are on the road.

Whether I fly with angels, fall with dust,
Thy hands made both, and I am here.
Thy power and love, my love and trust,
Make one place everywhere.

We dwell too much in our religion on the crucifixion of Christ, and not enough upon His Life; just as we are too prone to mourn our dead, rather than to reach out into their fuller life and to share it.

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The greater our grief the worthier must be those thoughts with which we rise to meet it. Let us lift up our eyes unto the hills from whence cometh our help.

—One adequate support
For the calamities of mortal life
Exists—one only; an assured belief
That the procession of our fate, howe'er
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power,
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good.

And George Herbert says:—

Awake sad heart, whom sorrow ever drowns,
Take up thine eyes which feed on earth.
Unfold thy forehead, gathered into frowns,
Thy Saviour comes, and with Him mirth,
Awake! Awake!
And with a thankful heart His comfort take.

Arise sad heart; if thou dost not withstand,
Christ's resurrection thine may be.
Do not by hanging down break from the hand
Which as it riseth, raiseth thee.
Arise! Arise!
And with Christ's burial linen, dry thine eyes.

If we will but look up it may be a new wonder shall meet our eyes. Like Anodos we may have divine assurance

“of unspeakable joy. Of friendships restored, and knowledge of revived embraces. Love will tell us it has never died, and faces long vanished, will yet say, with smiling lips—that they know nothing of the grave. Pardons may be implored to be granted with such bursting floods of love that the heart shall be almost glad that it once sinned; and we shall wake contented. Thus may we pass,” like him, “into this wondrous twilight, to find—our boat floating motionless beside the grassy shore of some new island.”

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Let us listen to these lines, and have done with graves and cerements. The soul knows nothing of them, and they are misleading.

Who lives, he dies.
Who dies, he is alive.

And now, if Symbolism means anything; if these few fragments of this great subject that I have gathered together, and these quotations stand for Truth, it is that there is a spiritual world around us, vast, potent, and living, inexhaustible and sublime. Immeasurably potent in its effect upon us, and far more radiant than we, while here in this earthly body, can possibly tell or see.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard . . .", but Symbolism, in the scattered letters of a secret language, tells us of its existence, and the "Indweller" recognises his own, and understands.

Then in our moments of so sore sadness let us tell ourselves and each other that Death, the death of those most dear to us, is quite different from what we suppose, and from what we are led far too often, to consider it to be.

"It is a far happier thing," says Walt Whitman, "and a far luckier."

I like the use of that homely and familiar word in this context; it seems to suit so well the young and happy soldiers who have gone on.

"Good luck have thou, with thine Honour—Ride on, because of the Word of Truth."

Ride on! It enheartens one to say it. No waiting or repining here, no resting in the tomb, or folding of the hands in sleep, *Ride on!*

And another aspect of the same truth, Walt Whitman calls these who are spoken of as dead as "the

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companions." He admits of no separation, you see, "no severing of our loves," or lives. And this is true. They are our companions. Let us never confound them with the grave.

Then if what we call Death is, as a score of symbols tells us, and as the Indweller within us continually asseverates it to be, a fuller life, an ampler self-realisation, a greater capacity for joy, let us never fear it, and above all let us never grudge it to those we love who have ridden on, with their honour; because in the knowledge of their nearness to us, and in the security of their well-being, and in the power of communicating with them, we hold the Word of Truth.

(1)

THE END

Shepherd's Crowns

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